

The Lady of the Snows



Edith Ogden Harrison



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The Lady of the Snows



Together they fought their way down
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The
LADY OF THE SNOWS
A NOVEL

BY
EDITH OGDEN HARRISON

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Princess Sayrane, Prince Silver Wings,
The Glittering Festival, etc.

With Illustrations and Decorations
By **J. ALLEN ST. JOHN**

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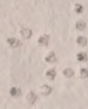
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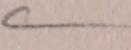
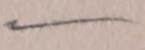
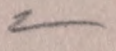
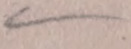
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To
My Husband

ILLUSTRATIONS

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Chapter

I



T WILL, of course," said the Archbishop, "be a great loss to me when she marries. Remember, I have had her with me for many years."

The younger man said nothing.

After a glance at the set and troubled face, the Archbishop continued, his voice softly modulated but ringing with an undercurrent of deep emotion, "But if she marries a man she can love and respect, the knowledge will be a solace to me."

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And still the younger man said nothing.

"However," reflected His Grace, whimsically, "if you are never to meet, how can either of you judge of love?"

At these words the man opposite stirred, and met the regard of the benevolent eyes with a keen though respectful look, while he spoke with some eagerness.

"True; then do you still think it wiser to accept her mandate and wait?"

"A woman's tongue in anger," the elder man oracularly remarked, "is like a man's fist, you know. You should both be calm when you meet."

The other's strong, handsome face became slightly cynical.

"Do you think," said he, "that calmness ever won a woman?"

His Grace smiled indulgently.

"The fair sex," he expounded, "is an unreasonable sex, a barbaric sex, and no amount of argument would avail you now, my friend."

"But," the young man protested, with sudden warmth, "the fact that mine is a fool's errand is not to be considered with compla-

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cency. It is not very flattering to one's self-esteem to be at the beck and call of a spoiled young lady's whims; I have already wasted time enough over them. Furthermore, if I can't boast the glory of winning, there is a certain grace in admitting defeat. Isn't there?"

The Archbishop laughed outright.

"Perhaps, perhaps," said he. "But defeat is not yet, is it?" And he added with twinkling eyes: "When the time finally arrives for that long deferred meeting, you may count on me as an ally."

So complete was his surprise at this unexpected offer, that Charlton Trevelyan was startled.

"That is indeed good of you, sir," he stammered lamely, with an Englishman's characteristic diffidence and reluctance when his feelings are sympathetically touched. But the unaffected way in which the Archbishop overlooked his discomposure quickly set him at ease again.

"A man's faith," the older man pensively pursued, "is sometimes intuitive. For days

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mine has been crystallizing." He turned his serene eyes full upon the young man, and added gently: "I believe in you."

Trevelyan's heart warmed at the unmistakable sincerity of this brief tribute, for it was much more pregnant and comprehensive than an extended panegyric could have been; it was spontaneous, genuine. "What a splendid old man!" was his impulsive thought. His ruffled feelings were in a measure soothed—and they were sadly in need of soothing—by the well-disposed attitude evidenced. For had he not been tricked into coming all the way to Canada, only to suffer humiliation at his journey's end? He had, at any rate, so assured himself many times. Consequently it was wonderfully inspiring to be convinced of a partisanship that meant something, for the Archbishop's influence, in many directions, was incalculable.

Hilaire du Bertrand, the Right Reverend, Archbishop of Quebec, was an oldish man, sixty or sixty-five, tall and largely built, and possessing features of much strength. But it was the strength of simplicity as much as of

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personality, of a character that had been moulded by purity of purpose and an undeviating adherence to lofty, ennobling aims. His mouth was large, nose prominent, chin firm, and the brown eyes, rather deeply set, revealed a humorous light that bespoke tolerance for petty weaknesses of the flesh. He had a broad forehead and soft, silky white hair in great abundance. His teeth were white and even, and no one would ever have mistaken the birth of the Archbishop; he had that indescribable air of breeding that called forth instant respect. He wore a plain cassock with purple buttons, but even without his cassock you would have divined his calling from the air of church authority so distinguishable in the Catholic priest. The amethyst on his third finger, the large cross with the same stone on his breast, marked his distinction. His office demanded the courtesy address of your lordship and your grace.

That Rome valued his services was attested by the broad power she granted him in Canada. In his church work he was supreme, and his exceptional mentality often had served

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the Government, too, in good stead. That for some years his position and achievements had made him the most conspicuous personality in Quebec was merely an inevitable corollary.

With all his wisdom, though, he was the most modest of men. In spite of his piety and his devotion to his holy calling, he was fond of a joke. Possessing as he did such an admirably rounded character, it was not remarkable that he was one of the most popular men in the entire Dominion.

Hilaire du Bertrand was proud of his church in Canada. He was proud of her because he knew what she had accomplished had been brought about only by herculean effort; that every inch of soil had been won by the blood of martyrs. He realized to the full her hours of agony, and he knew the brilliancy she shed around her today was gained only by fire and sacrifice.

The Archbishop and Trevelyan were sitting in the library of the former's home in Quebec. As he spoke, the lines of humor were apparent around his Grace's mouth, and

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his eyes twinkled merrily. It was discernible from his mien, that while he sympathized with the young man's discomfiture, he was amused at its cause.

"After all," he said, "women's ways are not men's ways. The youngest of them shall ever remain enigmas to the oldest and wisest of us. Indeed, the wider the span of years separating us, the less capable we are of drawing conclusions."

The Englishman bowed politely; there really was no comment he cared to make—anyhow, not where the Archbishop could hear him.

To say that he was annoyed but mildly expresses the state of his feelings at this time. Events certainly had taken a turn that never could have been imagined and much less provided against by the most astute and sophisticated in the ways of inconsequential femininity.

His Grace continued: "Your coming was, after all, a mistake. And yet," he added, smiling, "I can not quite blame you; she is in every way worth the undertaking."

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But there was not the shadow of a smile on the young man's face. On the contrary, he looked distinctly vexed.

"Why did she write for me to come?" Trevelyan demanded. "Why summon me all the way from England only to deny me admission to her august presence? What inferences may one draw from such a — er — such extraordinary conduct?"

The Archbishop shrugged his shoulders. "Caprice — some sudden whim," he ventured; "how should I really know? At your age one could tell better. But if I might offer a reason," he continued, quizzically, "the natural curiosity of the sex to see the man to whom one is engaged might be a sufficient motive for her letter. Do you not think so?"

"Perhaps. But, then, why this sudden flight on the very day of my arrival?" Trevelyan was both disgusted and indignant.

The pretty room, with its dim light and soft shadows, and its faint perfume of flowers, all at once grew disagreeable to him. He, Charlton Trevelyan, twenty-six, and belonging to the best and finest of English stock,

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tricked—yes, that was his word—tricked into coming to Canada to satisfy a girl's caprice, and then to be laughed at for his pains! To be told, on his arrival, that she would not see him! He had never heard of a parallel case. He had considered every possible excuse that might condone her treatment of him, but his shocked sensibilities could admit no extenuating circumstances; her conduct, viewed from any angle, was nothing short of outrageous and—vulgar.

The Archbishop's kind, shrewd eyes read much of all this in the young man's face, and his tone was correspondingly tempered with gravity when next he spoke.

“My son, I know that it is very hard for a man in your position to sit quietly down and wait while a woman makes up her mind. But if you have any philosophy, bring it to bear now; my ward is worth the winning, and years of waiting are none too many to gain her love.

“Your engagement is, of course, peculiar. Forced upon both of you by her doting uncle, you stand to lose the immense fortune he left

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by refusing to accede to a dying man's whim. Betrothed in childhood as a jest, his will has made the retention of his vast wealth dependent upon your marriage—before her twenty-fifth birthday—and to that extent the will is binding.

“Strange, is it not,” he went on, in a musing strain, “that a man apparently sane can so meddle with the present that the consequences of his acts reach into the future and affect the lives of others after his death. Every attempt to anticipate the Divine Will, my son, is invariably fraught with dangerous possibilities.” His tone abruptly became definite.

“She got her money, as you know, on her eighteenth birthday, and now at twenty-three has learned to appreciate its power. The magnificent hospitals, the schools, the convents she has built, all testify how properly she has used it; but this charitable spirit also shows how loath she would be to part with it. With the comparatively small amount that she would receive in the event of her refusal to marry you, she could do nothing more in the great work she has planned.”

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Of a sudden the Archbishop concentrated his magnetic regard full upon Trevelyan. He continued: "Good men are rare, my son. I like your face, and you come of fine stock. The Earls of Ducie and their sons stand for honor and probity in England, and I believe that my ward might be happy with you. But," he shrewdly concluded, "do not forget that mere *worthiness* in a man is not always the quality that appeals strongest to a woman."

"I wonder," Trevelyan irrelevantly asked, "why she asked to see me at all?" For the first time he smiled. "She is capricious. I never knew a woman with a drop of French blood in her veins who was not. I suppose that explains everything."

The Archbishop arose, and for a time paced sedately to and fro before replying.

"Hardly that," he presently said, with an air of giving the supposition careful consideration; "I never before knew her to act so impulsively. But her nature is very determined."

On a table near Trevelyan was a glass filled with pomegranate seeds brought from the

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tropics. Their wonderful color caught and held his eyes. They were like deep colored pink pearls: unconsciously he leaned forward and put one of the delicious tasting particles into his mouth.

The Archbishop smiled benignly upon him.

"Now that you are here," he inquired, "what do you intend doing? Will you return to England at once?"

"No," Trevelyan hastily replied; "I think I shall have a try at your big game."

He entertained only the haziest notion of doing so, however; but he went hot and cold by turns at the very thought of going home to England and confessing his failure not only to meet, but even to catch a glimpse of his fiancée, Miss Patricia Sutherland. He was unable to conceive of a man being placed in a position more ridiculous or humiliating.

"Good!" His Grace endorsed the decision with energetic warmth. "The West will prove a revelation to you. And while you are about it, get into touch with its life, its people; you will then have something worth while to think about. That is the only way to

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gather impressions of any country. We are not all frivolously gay, as you have seen us in Quebec and Montreal; we have our serious side when we arrive at the mountains, the great rivers, the wide-spreading plains, and the ocean. Perhaps, after all, these things constitute, or stand for, what is best in the Dominion."

And thus it was settled that Trevelyan was to go West.

*



Chapter

2



H, the freshness and the glory of the West! Trevelyan had never dreamed of anything like it. Its fascinations beckoned him like a siren. Vast waterways with purple recesses of shores unveiled themselves to his delighted eyes, and snow-crowned mountains stirred him to admiration of their solemn beauty.

As he journeyed across Canada, Charlton Trevelyan was disturbed by many new thoughts and unfamiliar emotions; but it was

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on the balcony of the château at Lake Louise that his doubts were finally resolved and the spirit of determination entered fully into his soul.

He had just finished a successful hunting trip, which had continued some weeks, and only the day before had returned from Lake O'Hara across the Continental Divide. There he had climbed dizzy heights in pursuit of the nimble wild goat; and there, under the spell of a set of influences that had guided his cogitations into channels altogether fresh and novel, he had found time to think. This trip to Canada, if it had done nothing else for him, had supplied abundant material for thought.

High up amidst the eternal silences of the snow-mantled Selkirks he had meditated profoundly. No man of ordinary intellect can mount the summit of that lofty range, or cross the Rockies, without being made conscious of depths in his intangible self that he never dreamed of before.

And as Trevelyan sought out the silent places and gazed across the majestic sweep

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that separates peak from peak, as he contemplated the glittering cloud-tipped crags and the seemingly immeasurable depths of granite-ribbed cañons, or brooded in the dark recesses of forest-clad slopes, or when he crossed some unknown lake of wonderful color and mysterious depths, with waters lying in a basin scooped out of solid rock then the inexpressible grandeur of the West, its wild beauty and immensity, stirred him as he had never been stirred. Hitherto, without offensively obtruding his opinion, he had believed the Trevelyans to be fashioned of a superior kind of clay; here, where on every hand he stood face to face with God's naked handiwork, his pride was humbled, his spirit chastened. He was made to feel, for the first time in his life, the worthless insignificance of humanity in the presence of eternal Nature. The futility of his own aimless existence was brought home to him with overwhelming force.

In truth, this idea had been germinating in his mind ever since his arrival in the Dominion; he was now aware that it had added

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to his disquiet during the few weeks spent at Quebec, where he had hearkened to the Archbishop, and had not been blind to His Grace's busy life nor the fruits thereof; but out here, in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, conviction had sprung suddenly into full growth, and for a period his lot was indeed well-nigh unbearable; the past and such deformed philosophy of life as it had offered was slipping away from him, while what the future might have to offer instead had not been revealed. The old, insecure foundation was crumbling in ruins, with imminent peril to the supported house, because the new one was being too tardily substituted.

But Hope threw wide her doors, and smiled her most welcoming smile, when he realized that the remedy lay within himself,—*he* must do *something*. He must achieve something that would justify his taking and maintaining a place among his fellows. It was with a sense of shock that he realized that heretofore he had deliberately scorned that place, and made light of it, when in reality it constituted his one valuable heritage.

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Having arrived at this stage in his mental and moral rehabilitation, he was able for the first time to review his past with less prejudice against truth, and to consider with less bitterness the circumstances that had jarred him from his well-ordered—if dull and useless—routine and brought him to Canada.

Charlton Trevelyan was the third son of an old and noble family. His eldest brother, the Earl of Ducie, possessed the title and estates; his other brother was carving a career for himself in the army. Had he himself drifted with the conventional current, Charlton might have found preferment in the Church, but his trend of mind did not make that calling appear particularly attractive; and so, on a moderate income, he had managed a bit of traveling, and had practically thrown away his chances—as his friends were thoughtful enough to point out. After one of his African trips, he had remained in England a year; long enough to chafe at the restrictions and delimitations that surround the third in line of succession to a title.

But if environment and enforced habits of

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life had rendered him ripe for failure, constant knowledge that he was engaged to one of the richest girls in Canada was the final influence potent to work his irretrievable undoing. However feebly ambition may have spurred him, it was made impotent by this knowledge; all incentive was dulled to ineffectiveness.

And here was a striking example of the mischievous results that may proceed from—as the Archbishop phrased it—“an attempt to anticipate the Divine Will.” Patricia Sutherland’s father’s brother had loved Trevelyan’s mother for the whole of his life since adolescence; Fate had separated them; but he had willed that their blood should be mingled by the marriage of his niece with her son. In the event of both refusing to marry, his truly stupendous fortune, represented by miles and miles of priceless timber and unnumbered mines, was bequeathed to the cities of Quebec and Montreal, for the creation and maintenance of parks, museums, and libraries; if one refused, the other inherited outright; but until her twenty-fifth birth-

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day Patricia was to enjoy all the income and benefits of the property. On their marriage, it was to be divided equally between them. He was three years and some months her senior; therefore, in his twenty-eighth year he would begin to share the immense estate with her.

Trevelyan, however, had long been restive under the restrictions the girl had put upon him. She had wrung a promise from him not to attempt to see her until the beginning of the three months prior to their marriage—the period specified by the will for the furtherance of their acquaintance. By means of a coldly formal and businesslike letter, she had very frankly and very concisely laid before him the reasons for her willingness to abide by the testamentary conditions; she wished to retain her share of the fortune in order to continue the charitable and philanthropical work to which she had dedicated her life, and anything savoring of sentiment was to be rigidly avoided, in their present and future relations alike. It was, in short, a cold-blooded business proposition, in which

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she sought all the advantages obtainable, with a supreme disregard for and indifference to his feelings or desires in the matter. More than once he had been strongly tempted to release her altogether from the bond, because in that case she would still inherit the money; but he had never quite brought himself to doing so. He had all of an Englishman's love of wealth and the power and advantages which wealth alone can give, and all such manly and becoming impulses were drugged with casuistry: he would wait until he had seen her; they might, after all, get on as well as the next couple; besides, he had an actual interest in the money, for half of it was indisputably intended for him; an active antipathy would certainly be discovered during three months' courtship, and the matter could be definitely settled at any time within that period. He invariably contented himself with the foregoing argument.

He even had no photograph of her, since her ban against sentiment had prompted a curt refusal of his request for one, and he had seen her only once — when she was eight years

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old. His only distinct impression of that meeting was of a slim little girl whose predominating features were eyes and legs.

When he first looked down upon Lake Louise, every dormant impulse for good within him made itself manifest. The spell of his enchanting surroundings was strongly upon him. A dazzling heaven overhead, magnificent snow-capped mountains, stupendous glaciers confronting him like frozen Amazons, and the painted portals of the valley narrowing in distant perspective and shimmering in hues of translucent purple and red, awed his soul and filled him with a profound sense of shame. What could he do? What could he ever hope to accomplish? His education had been at the expense of self-reliance, and in all his twenty-six years of drifting with the current he had really never met with an obstacle.

This Canadian girl had given him his first rebuff; that had stung more than he cared to admit; but, in sober truth, nothing except his *amour propre* had been injured. He had read somewhere that obstacles overcome were the

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stepping-stones to greatness, that through sacrifice and unselfishness a man developed character; if that were true, how lax his life must have been, how unfit he was now.

In these placid mountain solitudes it was brought home to him how unprepared he was to take up any branch of Canadian business. He lacked capital, experience, initiative, everything requisite to start him upon a commercial career, and there was little in his past save an unblemished reputation for punctilious observance of his class's ethical code to inspire confidence in his ability. There was literally nothing for which he was properly equipped.

This period was one of black depression and despair, a time of utter hopelessness; and then, lo! a miracle was wrought.

On a certain crystalline night when a brilliant moon, riding high in a star-studded sky of deepest indigo, transformed the glittering peaks into icebergs and made of the lake a scintillating jewel, it was given to him that he should hear a Voice.

And in the bottom of his soul a conviction

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found its abiding place, that the Voice henceforth was to be his inspiration and his mentor, and that it would direct him out of the night and into the light, and set his feet firmly upon the broad highway that leads to Achievement.



Chapter

3



HE sat smoking on one of the balconies of the château, contemplating and unconsciously drinking in the glories of the placid night. The air was keen with frost, for though the September days are full of warmth, the nights are cold; and he had about made up his mind to reënter the hotel when he saw a man and a woman approach the veranda from the ballroom, where now and then he had been vaguely aware that an orchestra was playing. The couple were separated from

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him by a thick screen of shrubs, so that in the moonlight and the light from the windows and doors he was unable to distinguish their faces. As he was sitting quietly, he assumed that they had not been attracted to him.

But their voices came to him clearly, and occasionally, through the intervening screen of branches and leaves, he caught glimpses of the white dress and silver scarf the woman wore. It was impossible, however, for him to obtain a distinct view of her face, though after a bit he was trying his best to do that very thing, for the words he could not help overhearing had a strangely moving effect upon him. The very first sentence was of a nature to hold his attention, making him disregardful of that which at another time he would have been instantly aware of—that he was listening to a conversation not intended for his ears. But the words seemed to have been inspired by his own gloomy meditations; they came to him like an oracle's response to his sick spirit's appeal, suffusing his bleak soul with sunshine and warmth and hope. Evi-

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dently she was replying to a question of her companion's.

"Because men fight for something here. That is what makes life more interesting—fuller of sensation—in this Western world."

"Do you, then, love power so much as that?" the man asked.

"Not power alone! I love triumph—the triumph over weakness—the surmounting of obstacles—the ruthless conquest of every difficulty, every impediment to progress. I love success! But my real reason is that idleness disgusts me. A man who can sit supine in this age is not a man at all. He must move men. He must lead if there is anything in him. No matter how small his world, he must work to win."

"Ah, you women of Canada," commented the man, lightly, "you take life so seriously!" Trevelyan judged him to be an alien, like himself.

She continued: "Are the women here alone in entertaining sane, ennobling ideals and trying to live up to them? I should think that all women with red blood in their veins must

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think the same. The men we know," she proudly affirmed, "do not sit waiting in perpetual silence for the gods to provide."

"What, then," the man questioned, curiously, "are the qualifications of your ideal?"

"He must *seek* opportunity," she quickly returned, "create situations, not wait for them to devise themselves and invite him to participate in their benefits; that type of man is a born leader of men, and ultimately reaches success because he can not help himself."

"But," said the man, deprecatingly, "where shall one find opportunity? It does not hang from every branch, nor lurk at every turn of the road."

"Yes," the girl contradicted, "it does—here. Here, in the mountains, opportunities are countless; here is the kernel of life—mines, timber, mills, land to be developed, cities—a whole empire—to be built."

Half in jest she spoke, but Trevelyan this night possessed the divining instinct that caught the serious undercurrent of her tone. He did not doubt that she spoke truth.

The man next said: "Ah, Mademoiselle,

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how your eyes sparkle—how your face glows—as you say that! Were I younger, you would not speak twice to urge me to action.”

The girl’s silvery laugh rang clear as a bell. The man with her, then, was old—at least, he was not a young man. Why this circumstance pleased Trevelyan he could not have told, but it did. And he would have given a good deal to see the girl’s face; the voice he would recognize, no matter where he heard it. It was deliciously low, yet with its soft pitch, clear and distinct.

“Why are you surprised at my views?” she asked. “Power over self, power over men—that is life. To live a few such hours is worth all the years of the idle rich. Life is flooded full of something that money can not buy. I have no words that will express my contempt for the man who is content with his lot.”

“And for that other, that happy, man,” queried her companion, “the demi-god of your fancy, what would you do for him?”

Trevelyan moved uneasily. He should not listen he knew, yet for the life of him he could not help it. He hung upon her answer.

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"I love the masters," she defiantly retorted. "There is nothing such a man might ask of me that I would not willingly grant."

What magic was there in the woman's voice that held Trevelyan spellbound, thrilling with its individuality? Invisible waves of ether, radiating from an indefinable centre, were enveloping his soul, as he hearkened. Had some psychic message gone forth from him, that her words should come like an answer to his troubled thoughts? She had revealed to him, unmistakably, that everybody must labor if the world in all her loveliness was to be enjoyed. Life was not the flesh-pot and the fire of self-indulgence.

And as these convictions crowded upon him, he rose up a man, newly made and resolute, his face set unflinchingly upon the path before him.

That night, before retiring, he wrote to the Archbishop, soliciting his influence to procure him a commission as an officer of the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

And all the next day he haunted the lobby of the hotel, listening for her voice and

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hoping to be able to look upon the face of the woman who so unconsciously had inspired him with courage for the vital, determining decision of his life. Indeed, he was obsessed by an inexplicable certitude that he would see her again; which, perhaps, was not so strange after all, when it is considered that she contributed so materially to the shaping of his destiny; and for several days he lingered on at Lake Louise and until the conclusion could not be avoided that she was no longer there.

But he departed at last with the conviction still strong upon him that he would meet her again somewhere, and that he would find her as beautiful as she now seemed elusive and mysterious.



Chapter



4



HERE were three things that lay very close to the heart of Hilaire du Bertrand, Archbishop of Quebec, his Church, his Ward, and his Hobby. The first of these, it goes without saying, represented the absorbing interest of his life; the second was the object upon which he lavished the devotion of his affectionate nature; the third was—Reciprocity.

It is rather difficult to impart an accurate conception of the relative importance which

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he attached to the second two of the interests mentioned, because sometimes his ward and sometimes his hobby engrossed his whole attention to the exclusion of all other matters mundane; and this particular morning he was thinking neither of his priestly duties and obligations, nor of his one great material ambition — namely, a full and complete reciprocal agreement between Canada and the United States. It follows, therefore, that he must have been occupied with Miss Sutherland's affairs.

That his thoughts respecting the willful young lady in question were of an agreeable character was made manifest by the pleasant expression animating his strong but delicate countenance. He was at breakfast. Beside his plate reposed the bulk of his morning's mail, while two letters lay open before him: one was the letter written by Trevelyan at Lake Louise and received the morning previous; the other was from Patricia Sutherland, and had been mailed at a postoffice many miles distant from the beautiful resort in the mountains. He had digested them both

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with exceptional care, but something in the girl's letter had impelled him to hunt up Trevelyan's and compare the two; whereupon he had fallen into a train of reflection that was leading the good Archbishop into all sorts of happy complications and surprising possibilities, and as he meditated he would refer every now and then to one or the other of the missives. Occasionally he chuckled softly, and rubbed his hands together in a manner that was expressive of extreme satisfaction.

The tenor of Trevelyan's letter we are already acquainted with. Miss Sutherland's was somewhat discursive, as a young lady's letters to her closest confidant are wont to be; but it contained numerous passages which seemed to afford His Grace a good deal of delight, for he read them again and again.

"After turning the matter over in my mind," ran one of these passages, "I do not in the least feel that I owe Mr. Trevelyan an apology. It is merely a question of dollars and cents with him, and he shall be paid in dollars and cents for performing the sole

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function in which I have the slightest interest concerning him: which is to insure to me the means of continuing the program I have mapped out for the future. If my plans and movements are to remain absolutely free and unhampered after marriage, why should I discommode myself now? I do not believe he could find a means more gratifying to himself by which to earn his hire, than to wait and do nothing; it is the only thing that training and inclination have made him proficient in."

Another read: "I have simply taken advantage of woman's prerogative; whether I shall do so again and consent to receive him depends entirely upon whether I can overcome a feeling that I shall thereby be demeaning myself. Such a conviction is very strong on me right now, and I just had to get out in the open and cleanse myself with God's pure air. . . . What is to be gained by such a meeting now? I am by no means ignorant of the type, and you know the contempt in which I hold it; then why should I add to my feelings disgust for the individual? . . . He can spare himself the trouble of consulting my

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wishes, for it is my purpose to follow my own inclinations without consulting him, or, indeed, considering him otherwise than in exact accordance with a strict interpretation of my uncle's will. My wants and my actions are no concern of his."

Considering that His Grace believed these caustic declarations and observations would have acted like acid upon their subject's sensitive organization, it is rather remarkable that repeated perusals of them should afford him so much gratification; as we have no other clew to his thoughts, aside from a knowledge that his ability to read human character amounted to infallible accuracy of judgment, it can only be surmised that he was looking into the future and picturing a meeting and a ripening acquaintance between these two young people, amid conditions and surroundings which neither could possibly dream of now. He was, moreover, ignorant of the transformation that Trevelyan had undergone—or, rather, that the transformation had occurred so soon; if he had known of it he would have realized that the young man, instead of

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being hurt and insulted by Patricia Sutherland's letter, would have been in a frame of mind to humbly admit every one of her charges.

After finishing his morning meal, he repaired at once to his library, where he gave considerable attention to the composition of a long, intimately friendly letter to his ward, at the conclusion of which he mentioned, in the most casual way, that Charlton Trevelyan had concluded to remain indefinitely in Canada, and that he was seeking a commission in the N. W. M. P.

Being as he was in close touch with every department of the Government, he experienced no difficulty in securing a commission for the applicant; a service which, for some unexplained reason, seemed measurably to add to His Grace's enjoyment of a highly diverting situation.



Chapter

5



SINCE their organization in 1873, the Royal North-West Mounted Police of Canada have ever been an irresistibly inviting theme for the romancer and the spinner of tales of stirring adventure wherein extremes of hazard are a part of the daily routine. Some of this literature represents the riders of the plains in a true light; much more is utterly untrustworthy and what the troopers themselves characterize as "guff."

For, like all brave men, they are modest,

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these intrepid spirits, shunning as partaking of the nature of a vain show any parade of achievement in desperate undertakings which to them are of everyday occurrence and all in the line of duty. Here are a mere handful of men—six hundred and fifteen officers and troopers, all told—who keep better order and enforce a stricter observance of the law in a region including two million six hundred thousand square miles than do the thousands of metropolitan police in the quite circumscribed territory of a city like New York or Chicago, not to mention the countless advantages which a city affords. All pioneer settlements are notoriously lawless and reckless, and inclined to be governed only by contemptuous disregard for all attempts at regulation; and these facts, together with the tremendous distances that have to be patrolled, the nature of the country, and lack of the commonest conveniences, more than offset any difficulties that may be presented by congestion of population.

And then, your city policeman has a whole host of reserves at his instant beck and call,

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should he happen to want them; his personal responsibilities are comparatively few and slight; while, on the other hand, the Mounted Policeman oftener than not works alone, or at best with no more than a corporal's guard. Reinforcements are frequently hundreds of miles away, and only to be reached after an arduous horseback journey, or by dog-sled, or afoot; so he goes ahead about what he has to do, with never a thought of reinforcements.

The standards by which the Mounted Police are made unerringly reject the weak and the unfit. They have a saying that amounts almost to a motto: "It is the hardest body in the world to enter, and the easiest to get out of;" and the sifting process results in a constantly uniform corps of intelligent, fearless, physically sound men of a high moral gauge, and trained by experts and by stern practice in the manifold duties they are expected to perform. Whether it is to convey a madman through five hundred miles of unbroken wilderness in the dead of winter, as did Constable Pedley and was himself driven insane by the experience, or to show an igno-

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rant settler how to build a house or cut a furrow, or nurse the victim of some malignant disease, or whether it is to ride single-handed into a band of Indian braves rapacious for white scalps and arrest their chief, the wearer of the scarlet tunic is ever ready, for it is all in the day's work. They are a hard-bitten body, every one a crack shot, miracles of endurance, and wonderfully capable.

Now, after Charlton Trevelyan's bitter depreciation of himself and his limited qualifications, does it not seem inexplicable that from the host of opportunities of whose existence the Voice at Lake Louise had assured him, he should have chosen this particular avenue as the shortest, most direct road to wealth and power? The truth of the matter is, however, that he scarcely could have decided more wisely, for he needed, first of all, a ripening, toughening experience, and the acquirement of a more perfect knowledge of his new field. His fondness for hunting and for adventuring in strange lands and the wild, untamed places of the world had perforce made him proficient in most of the require-

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ments for joining the Mounted Police, and therefore he was enabled to compress the customary six months' training that is exacted of all recruits into a few weeks. He was familiar with all sorts of firearms; he could ride and shoot with the best of them; he was inured to roughing it, to finding his way about, and caring for himself in all sorts of outdoor conditions, and he was, besides, a perfect specimen of physical health and strength. And then, too, he could bring to the body a trained intelligence of no mean order, and a tact and gentlemanly bearing which would often serve him in better stead than any display of force.

In short, he was more than material for an ideal trooper; his was the type of man needed to lead, to be placed in positions of responsibility where matters calling for delicate adjustment are constantly arising.

All this the Comptroller and Commissioner were quick to perceive, but lacking which qualifications even the Archbishop's powerful influence alone hardly could have obtained for him the desired opening. His own manifest ability and the Archbishop's friend-

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ship combined, however, were enough to smooth the way for him. The end of five weeks saw him a full-fledged trooper, and three months later he was placed in charge of an important mission.

The Canadian Railway Company was extending a branch line into an hitherto unopened region; operations were being hurried forward as speedily as circumstances would permit, and the work required a host of laborers. The construction of every far Western railroad through sparsely or unsettled territory invariably has been marked by deeds of violence of one sort or another. The labor is rough and fraught with hardships, and the men who perform it are rough and seek the grosser pleasures—such as are to be found in the groggery, the dance-hall, or at the gaming-table. So, in addition to a steady drink-inflamed, high-tension fighting humor among its own laborers, which blew off with more or less disastrous results after every pay-day, the railway had to cope with a horde of parasites—birds of prey—who fringed the camp and picked their living from the toilers.

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It was anything but an easy matter to keep this vicious element under something approaching even a semblance of control, and to Trevelyan was assigned the responsibility of quelling the wild disorder. He recognized the task ahead was difficult.

This is how he went about it.

One of the most pernicious of the camp's hangers-on was a certain individual whose appearance and repute were equally evil, known as "Pete." Because he was the owner of a liquor permit—the devil alone knows how he ever obtained it—his attitude toward the law's majesty, as personified by the solitary trooper who appeared unexpectedly upon the scene one day, was one of studied arrogance and sneering contempt. In other words, he industriously plied his rotten wiles, drugging the laborers with vile whisky, pleasantly robbing them of their hardly earned wages, and with a cheerful clap on the shoulder sending them back to earn more, so that the process might be repeated; and all this with a subtle but none the less real consideration of Trevelyan which, translated into

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words, would render: "What are you going to do about it?"

Unfortunately, Trevelyan could do nothing without positive evidence of some illegal act. It was absurd to expect a Sunday-school atmosphere amid the primitive conditions of this rude camp; the elemental forces prevailing here were as immeasurably beyond the sway of any refining or uplifting influence as so many earthworms. He could not stop Pete from selling whisky, nor prevent the laborers from drinking it. Nor could he interfere if they subsequently chose to hand over what remained of their wages to Pete through the medium of roulette, poker, or faro.

"He's the worst sort of mucker," Etheredge, the chief engineer, had assured him within an hour after his arrival. "I don't see why such coyotes are allowed to live—how they escape being shot or knifed, I mean. For God's sake, get him, Trevelyan. We'll stand by you. Most of the boys will, too, times they're not hide-full of his poison."

So, after a preliminary survey of the entire camp, he directed his particular attention to

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Pete's place, watching the games for evidence of crookedness, eying every drink that passed over the bar, in the hope of detecting Pete or his barkeeper in the act of "doping" it.

At once it became apparent that the unsavory proprietor resented this sharp surveillance, which he was not slow to discern. He came up to Trevelyan the third night where the latter leaned against the wall opposite the bar, and eyed him stonily from "Stetson" to boots, and back again.

"Say," he then rudely demanded, "ain't there nothin' doin' on yer beat, or is it more comfortable to loaf here than get busy at what you're hired to do?"

Trevelyan returned his look, unruffled, ignoring the sneering insinuation that he was afraid to patrol the camp. He quietly, but firmly replied:

"The place worst needing attention I picked out first. It is yours. I had meant to give you fair warning and a chance to be decent; but I take this occasion of your own making to tell you that I am going to run you out of this camp—close you up. Men

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of your stripe are not wanted here, and will not be tolerated."

For a moment Pete glared savagely at him, as if debating whether or not to lay violent hands upon him and forcibly eject him from the place; but Trevelyan's stalwart, upstanding figure, his unflinching look, and unmistakable fearlessness, made the other choose the wiser course. He laughed insolently, his manner deliberately offensive. For the benefit of any bystanders who might choose to lend him their "moral" support—because on principle the general sentiment was opposed to law and order—he had purposely spoken loudly, and Trevelyan's outwardly careless regard noted that several of the more desperate characters were watching him with open hostility; but, at the same time, he was gratified and encouraged at observing that most of the men attracted by the colloquy were either preserving blank expressions and attitudes of neutrality, or were moving rapidly out of earshot.

"Well," jeered Pete, "when you get anything on me, let me know."

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"With pleasure," returned Trevelyan. "I think it will happen tonight."

With that he unceremoniously shouldered his way through the press of barroom loungers to the crowd packed round the roulette table in the rear, while Pete followed his progress with a black look.

This particular game for two nights had absorbed Constable Trevelyan's attention; it presented at once the most alluring attraction in the camp, and the one game above all others which, to the intelligent observer, was hopelessly fixed against every player save the operator. By what mechanical contrivance this was accomplished Trevelyan had as yet been unable to discover, but he was now determined to settle the matter once and for all, within a very few minutes. The means he meant to use were desperate in the extreme, for if he failed at the climactic moment to expose the game's crookedness, the sympathies of the crowd inevitably would be turned against him, with what disastrous results he did not care to imagine.

Taking up his position among the outward

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fringe of spectators, he stood quietly watching the play, but deftly taking advantage of every movement of those in front of him to approach gradually closer to the long table. The atmosphere was poisonous with the odor of perspiring humanity and with the reek of liquor and tobacco smoke, and the constant clicking of chips and scraping of many feet was regularly punctuated by the whir of the wheel, the spinning ball, and the "croupier's" monotonous chant. The conversation was limited to brief, low questions and replies; but for the most part both players and on-lookers kept silently intent upon the shifting chances of the game.

Then of a sudden the familiar khaki uniform of a Mounted Policeman loomed up in the bright glare of the downward reflected lights. All eyes were promptly focused upon Trevelyan.

"Stand back a little, gentlemen," he said, quietly, to those who pressed closest to him, and then to the operator, who was staring in astonishment from under his green eye-shade: "Get up," he curtly commanded.

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For a second there was neither sound nor movement. Those first addressed had obeyed almost unconsciously, leaving a clear space about him. Then the operator recovered his self-possession. One hand shot forward toward the wheel, but not more quickly than the one which darted to intercept it from the opposite side of the table. Trevelyan's fingers closed like steel bands around the man's wrist, and with his other hand he picked up the little ivory ball and pushed it deep down into a pocket of his trousers.

"Get up from there," he spoke again, in the same tone of command — "unless you want to get hurt."

As he released the hand at the same time, the man obeyed nimbly enough, colliding violently with the proprietor, who had been quick to note that something was amiss. With an impatient snarl, Pete tossed the fellow to one side and lunged forward into his place. His bearing was so venomously threatening as to eclipse any demonstration that by this time might have been stirring among the interrupted players, and they drew still far-

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ther back, leaving the two chief actors in the center of the stage. It was Pete's fight, anyway.

"Right here's where you get yours," began that worthy, with a volley of oaths.

But what Trevelyan was to have gotten was never revealed. Without warning, the sole of his heavy riding-boot crashed against the flimsy table with a force that hurled it, together with the more solid apparatus, up and over against the infuriated proprietor, who spoke not nor moved again until after many minutes of persevering ministration by certain of his minions, from whose hearts fear of him was not so speedily vanished as had been his downfall.

What is more to the point, however, the wreckage laid bare just what Trevelyan had sought. The system of artfully concealed wires and tiny coil magnets could signify but one meaning, even to the dullest understanding. And when he had chipped away the "ivory" shell of the ball, disclosing a core of soft iron, it became as plain as day how easily the operator could determine the fall of the

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ball; everybody saw and realized the purpose of the small push-button placed inconspicuously under the table edge, and knew that by its skillful manipulation any combination of plays upon the table could be blocked.

Well, Pete's place was closed. Indeed, it required all of Trevelyan's persuasive powers to prevent its utter demolition; a period of excitement that enabled the aforementioned minions to spirit away their fallen chieftain before such decisive measures as a rope and a convenient telegraph pole could be called into play.

Next morning Trevelyan summoned before him all the remaining gamblers and resort keepers in and about the camp; this was, in part, an experiment, and he noted with pleasure that not a one of them ignored his invitation. He addressed them in a tone not unfriendly; quietly, but earnestly.

"Boys, what happened last night is only the beginning; it is up to you to see that it shall be the end, too. You know that I was sent here to enforce the law, and that I am going to do so. Of course, anything can happen to

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me; but that will not let you out. You also jolly well know that if anything does happen to me you chaps will be a thousand times worse off than Pete is this morning. Run straight and I shan't molest you; but at the first sign of crookedness—that chap will be closed up and shown the way out of camp. Be good and you'll be happy."

Trevelyan was sanguine enough to believe that the previous night's lesson would produce a lasting salutary effect; but his burdens were numerous enough and heavy enough without Pete and the rest of his fraternity, and he felt a momentary wave of depression after the last of his callers had disappeared—building a railroad seemed tame in comparison with what was expected of him.

His meditations were cut short by a faint sound behind him. He was lounging at his tent door, gazing out over the sprinkling of similar tents and temporary rough board shacks which dotted the level below him. He jerked round to behold an Indian standing within arm's length; he had been wholly unaware of the fellow's approach.

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Halfway startled, he stared into the impassive brown face, while the Indian slowly held out to him a fragment of soiled paper. He took it and at once gathered the meaning of the single scrawled line of writing.

“Ile git you you ————”

He flushed red hot; but immediately contempt for the writer removed the vile epithet's sting and convinced him of the threat's utter futility. He tossed the dirty bit of paper from him with a laugh.

What the messenger then did was significant. Gravely, he stooped and picked it up and handed it to Trevelyan again. Without the slightest trace of expression in either his face or his voice, he somehow managed to infuse a laconic bit of advice with a good deal of meaning.

“Pete, him heap bad man,” said the messenger. “You look out.”



Chapter

6



HAT Charlton Trevelyan was to have his whole attention and all of his energies kept busy pretty constantly, had already been deeply impressed upon his mind. The easy removal of one annoying difficulty by no means denoted that those remaining were to be approached as if they were merely stumbling-blocks calling for no more than a vigorous shove to remove them definitely; no, no: there were other factors which he quickly recognized as real, grave, potential dangers.

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One day it would be the head of a tomahawk firmly wedged at the joint of two rails; the next, a huge log, or maybe a veritable avalanche of boulders would be discovered upon the right of way just in the nick of time to avert a disastrous wreck; and while he was away on the trail of the culpable miscreants other miscreants would be running off the company's horses and cattle, or otherwise hampering the work.

Indian and white marauders were equally adept at stealing the stock, but there was no crime too petty for the former to stoop to. The redskins, however, entertained a more wholesome respect for the Mounted Police uniform than did many of the white desperadoes, and Trevelyan's presence in the neighborhood in a large measure checked their depredations. Still, they required ceaseless watching.

As may be imagined, the conditions described were exacting to the limit of Trevelyan's endurance; but his splendid physique and unflagging patience, his uniformly cool nerve in the face of every danger, shortly

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began to produce the one inevitable result: the conditions began to change for the better.

That he was the man for the place was demonstrated in a surprisingly short time; guilty individuals were so speedily and invariably apprehended, and so severely punished, that he began to find time hanging heavily upon his hands. The railway officials were warm in their commendation of his services; and this circumstance, together with his superior officers' appreciation of his ability and a fortuitous concurrence of two or three promotions and resignations, gave him an Inspectorship and full charge of the Maple Crossing depot.

As a commissioned officer he was now always more or less in communication with the headquarters depot at Regina, and one of the first things that attracted his attention was the number of important decisions which manifestly had been influenced by the reports of one G. Templeton. Particularly was this the case in all matters pertaining to the various Indian tribes. The information respecting the Indians possessed by this individual

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was really marvellous, and that this special knowledge was invaluable to the Government was evidenced by the frequency with which it had been acted upon. To the Englishman it was comprehensively enlightening, and his admiration and respect for G. Templeton constantly grew.

Indeed, here was a man worth cultivating. On more than one occasion, when Inspector Trevelyan asked for data on some specific subject, it would be supplied to him in the form of G. Templeton's report on same, which would be at once concise, exhaustive, and a model of typewritten neatness. By degrees a curiosity grew in his mind to learn more of the man, together with a desire to meet him. G. Templeton, serving as he did in a special capacity, must sometimes visit the various depots, Trevelyan argued; but a politely worded inquiry based upon this conclusion elicited a very unsatisfactory reply from headquarters: G. Templeton being a secret-service operative, Trevelyan was informed, the value to the Government depended largely on the identity being kept from the Service generally.

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But that name, nevertheless, was ordained to figure largely in Trevelyan's destiny, as he was presently to discover, although after the refusal by his chiefs it gradually came to occupy less and less of his speculations.

It may be recorded in passing that Pete and his disgusting warning had been utterly forgotten long since.

That Spring the Blackfeet tribe began to cause a good deal of trouble, and Trevelyan's activities in recovering the ponies and other live stock of the settlers in his district, and in tracking down and arresting the redskin thieves, kept him always on the move. Owing to the nearness of the International Boundary, he had to act sharply, else the culprits would cross into Montana with their booty, and it must be confessed that the United States authorities displayed no marked efficiency in coöperating with those of Canada.

His work was fast moulding habits both of living and thinking which, a few short months previously, he would not have thought possible. In truth, an altogether new life was opening up to him, one that gave him a zest

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he had never experienced and an interest in every detail of his labors, and he was acquiring a radically novel and sane point of view from which to contemplate his old life. Closely involved with this metamorphosis was a clinging memory of Lake Louise and all that had happened there. Often he seemed to see again the beautiful country of the Kicking Horse Pass, the Bow River Valley, and above the black avalanche of glacier (rising like the roof of the universe) the white snow fields of the mountains. Again he seemed to hear that beautiful voice and the rare personality which it had revealed. Would he never hear the one again or come to know the other.

It seemed intolerably cruel of Fate that he should be denied this reward. And then would come other questionings: If he were to meet her, would she care to know him? Would it in the least gratify her to learn that she had made a man anew?

That she was supremely beautiful he was convinced; for beauty inevitably must be the final distinguishing stamp of so many superior

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qualities. She was unmarried, for he recalled that the man with her had addressed her as "Mademoiselle"; but a year had passed since then; much can happen in a year; and if, when he *did* meet her—

He did not like to think of this possibility, and somehow his cogitations on the subject always stopped here. However, more or less always as he rode these or similar thoughts, and his horse, were his sole companions.

One night, after a particularly arduous but unsuccessful day's pursuit of a band of thieving Blackfeet, he returned at dusk to his cabin. Both horse and rider were nearly spent, but before satisfying his own hunger, or taking a well-earned rest, he saw that his mount was made comfortable for the night. He had been in the saddle since dawn, and had ridden hard and fast to make his camp before a threatening storm broke.

Almost as he entered the doorway he noticed upon his table a typewritten letter, unsigned. Something in its appearance had impelled him to snatch it up and look for the signature; but there was none.

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Now, improbable as it may seem, a type-writing machine that has been used for any considerable length of time acquires an individuality all its own which is quite as marked as a person's handwriting. The user of the machine nearly always manifests a partiality for a particular style and color of ribbon, for example; then certain minute imperfections of type and alignment have begun to appear, and there are almost imperceptible unevennesses of spacing at certain points: these all recurring at regular intervals are sufficient to identify the writer to any one who has read any considerable quantity of that writer's script.

It was this feeling of familiarity that had quickened Trevelyan, although he was unable to recall where or when he had seen a similar bit of text. But the missive's import promptly banished from his mind all speculation on the anonymous writer's identity. It was startling enough, and for some vague reason, convincing. Thus read the message:

No. 16, west-bound mail, will be wrecked tonight at trestle No. H3323, unless it can be flagged and

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warned at point nearest Maple Crossing. The trestle, as you know, spans a deep stony ravine, and reliable information is to the effect that it has been or will be tampered with for the purpose of ditching 16. As this conspiracy involves a direct plot upon your life, the writer believes this warning is due you. The woods are closely watched and it will be impossible for you to approach scene without being shot.

With his countenance a perfect blank, Trevelyan read through this alarming communication a half-dozen times before any clear thought crystallized in his brain. When it did, he tossed the sheet angrily upon the table and swore.

“Fancy anybody thinking I should be led off on a wildgoose chase like that!” It was indeed humiliating and irritating to learn that anybody should take it so for granted that he would deliberately shun a peril.

The thing, it was true, might be a joke; but a moment’s reflection reminded Trevelyan that there was always the odd chance that such a warning might be genuine; the familiar appearance of the printed lines increased this possibility. The writer himself might be in

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deadly peril. There was no telling what risks he might have braved to get him this message. A dozen good and sufficient reasons would account for the absence of a signature.

He stood and scowled down at the sheet, pulling at his lip and considering the best way to take advantage of its admonition.

By an unfortuitous chance, for the time he was alone: of the seven men constituting his little command, all were absent on one errand or another. Two constables had taken a band of Indian thieves to Edmonton; a sergeant and two other constables were still trailing the band he had been pursuing during the day, and none of them could be looked for before morning; while the remaining trooper might be in at any time. But delay meant danger, for Trevelyan had resolved to walk to the trestle, there being no mount available save his own, which was too far spent to be pressed into service again this tempestuous night.

So he scribbled a note to Constable Richardson, directing him to follow to the trestle with all speed, then donned slicker and sou'-

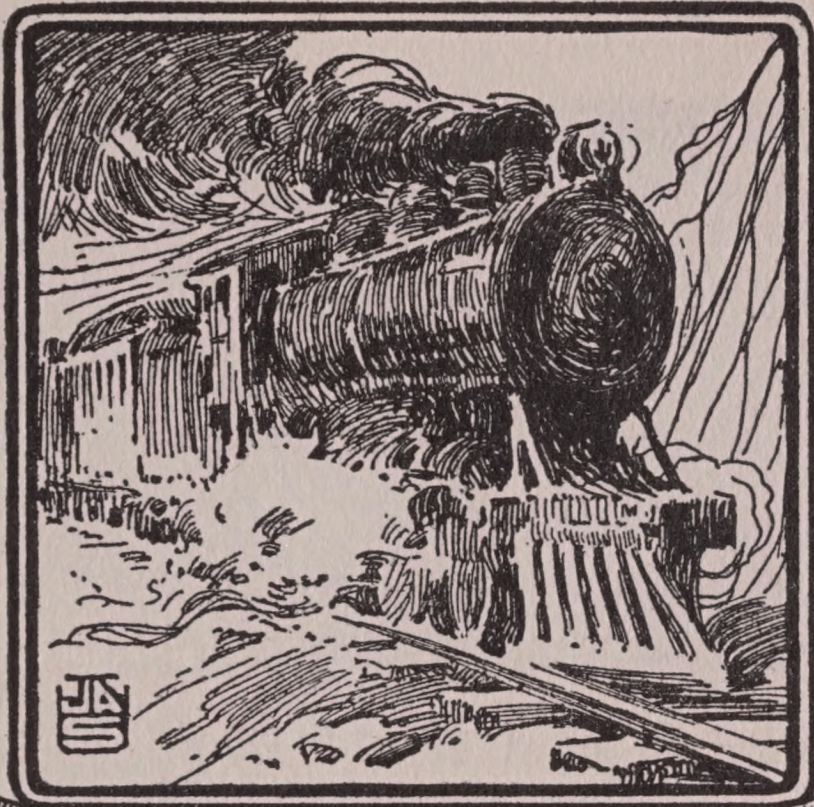
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wester, lighted a lantern, and struck out through the stormy blackness.

The rain had blown by, but the wind was still driving a gale, and the night was bleak and pitch dark.

“If it should prove a hoax,” he growled, “Lord have mercy on the chap who wrote that letter—if I ever find him.”

But somehow he could no longer believe that the warning was a hoax, and an indescribable fear chilled him to the marrow.



Chapter

7



FROM the high plateau of his cabin he descended into a valley, crossed a stream filled with wild grass, and circled the edge of a mountain to gain the shortest cut to the grove. He stumbled and floundered along, for the lantern was now hidden beneath his slicker, and, with his effort to hurry, beads of sweat started from every pore.

Would the struggle be in vain?

Despair seized him as the enormity of the impending disaster grew in his mind. All

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at once another aspect of the typed warning stood out luminously: his own fate was involved in the plot: why?

Like a flash Pete's evil visage appeared before his mental vision, and now when it was too late he deplored the indifference with which he had treated the scoundrel's threat. Why, even the ignorant savage messenger had been wiser than he! But he could only groan and stumble desperately, stubbornly, on through the night.

Pete could not have chosen a more effective method of retaliation. Trevelyan was convinced that his whole future was blasted. Nothing could excuse him in the eyes of the Government for the laxity that made such a deed possible. He was like the captain of a sinking ship: there was nothing to do but go down with her. Success and failure are such simple words to say, but oh! the space that lies between. Yet, terrible as this thought was—the idea that through no intentional fault of his he must be held accountable, and that nothing would palliate his negligence—it was lost in the larger horror of the sheer fiendish-

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ness of the man who could perpetrate such a deed in cold blood.

To the honor of Charlton Trevelyan it must be said that, excepting for the momentary horror that had overwhelmed him when he realized how much he had at stake if he failed to avert the disaster, he did not give a second thought to himself, nor to the threat against his own life. His one idea was to save the unsuspecting passengers who even now were being whirled swiftly to their doom. He was faint with dread at the wickedness of the human intelligence that could so wantonly traffic with human lives, and the very fact that his death was a part of the unspeakable plot overwhelmed him with a double sense of responsibility—he must save them even at the cost of his own life. There would be blood upon his hands forever if he failed in this crisis.

And so, burdened by the tumult in his mind, he struggled against and fought and overcame the obstacles of his path, pushing on without pause.

Of a sudden he stopped. From a distance

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came the wind-flung shriek of a locomotive.

Too late!

He staggered dizzily, and an icy hand seemed to reach out of the darkness and seize his heart.

Too late! Too late!

Where was the bridge? He stretched forth his own hand to steady himself; then joy and courage surged through him; for it encountered the unmistakable chill of iron. Almost with the same movement he swung himself up to one of the huge side girders and stood firmly planted upon the trestle, swinging his lantern crazily. The approaching headlight seemed about to topple over upon him.

That the desperadoes must be lurking nearby never entered his head until, with a sudden crash, his lantern seemed to explode in his hand, extinguishing itself like a soap bubble; then he became hazily aware that somebody had fired a shot, and that the very rocks and bushes seemed to be flashing and crepitating like an automatic gun. But the dense darkness was again his protection, and before he had time to consider his own safety, or that he

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had been robbed of the sole means of checking the train, he was all at once convinced that the night's strain had been too much for him. For between himself and the roaring train stood a white figure in the headlight's dazzling glare, swinging a lantern, just as he had been doing.

The sequence of events of the next few seconds remained for ever afterwards confused in his mind. The locomotive blared a loud stop signal, and with the abrupt grinding of emergency brakes he went plunging over the ties toward the figure in white. And just as he reached it, it began to sway, to fall. . . .

He stood holding the limp figure in his arms, thrilling with an overpowering consciousness of its femininity. The heavy train came to a jerking stop; the scene was flooded with light, and many people were insanely crowding and jostling one another. But Trevelyan remained oblivious to all of this, and as the light glowed on the figure in his arms the face of the woman, like a white impression on black paper, was stamped forever on his memory.

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He thrilled as he had that momentous night at Lake Louise, and looking into the pale face of the woman lying in his embrace he said: "It is she." There was no accurate reason he could give for such conviction but, nevertheless, he repeated to himself, "It is she."

With the silence of a ghost, an Indian girl appeared suddenly from out the darkness. She looked timidly up into Trevelyan's face, and laid a hand upon the insensible woman.

"Gloria!" she cried. "Gloria! Come!"

The woman stirred, her dark lashes raised languidly, and the man was gazing into the most beautiful eyes he had ever beheld.

She stared blankly at him for a moment; then a rich tide of color suffused her cheeks, and as she slowly recovered herself she withdrew from his embrace, and moving forward with the Indian girl vanished into the darkness before he could speak.

"Gloria," he voiced the name exultingly, "Gloria!"



Chapter



IN the confusion incident with the excitement at the bridge, Trevelyan completely lost sight of the woman he was now confident had sent him the warning. But with this conviction a tumult of questioning began in his brain. Why should she have been so solicitous of his personal safety, knowing it to be his duty to frustrate, if possible, just such criminal deeds? How could she have known, or even suspected, that a plot existed to ditch the train? And Pete—why, they were as far asunder as zenith and nadir!

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But he had little opportunity to ponder the matter; he reproached himself bitterly for having failed to invent some pretext to detain her; however, there was work at hand to be done, and it was incumbent upon him to assume charge.

The narrowly averted disaster constituted an offense much too grave not to call forth all the resources of the Mounted Police. The miscreants escaped for the time being, but the episode and its attendant circumstances made their capture a matter of personal honor with Inspector Trevelyan, and he directed all the strength of his will and mentality to that end. It was perhaps the most gratifying moment of his life when, through his direct instrumentality, Pete and his murderous followers were apprehended and speedily convicted.

But with them landed safely behind the bars and slated for long terms of imprisonment, for the first time he felt at liberty to look for the mysterious woman — for Gloria. When the first tentative inquiries elicited no news of her, he was disappointed, but scarcely surprised. He prosecuted the search more

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energetically. And then he became completely mystified: despite his perseverance and the machinery at his command, he could find no slightest trace either of her or the Indian girl, nor could he uncover any clew pointing to their identity. Had not others beside himself seen her while she was still in her swoon, he might have come to believe that she was a hallucination after all. It seemed incredible that so extraordinary a woman, one so beautiful and refined, could have anything in common with so rough a region without being regarded by the scattered inhabitants thereof as a sort of tutelary goddess.

He *must* find her. He owed this much to himself, for she had saved his reputation and his honor. He did not scruple to enlist not only his subordinates and colleagues in the quest, but questioned the Indians as well. But the result was always the same. She remained a mystery; she was as ineluctable and as intangible as a wraith.

And the desire to hear her speak, to confirm his belief that she was the woman of his dreams, the woman he had heard at Lake

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Louise, increased each hour. This one idea became an obsession with him: waking or dreaming he thought only of her. She was like a presence with him.

Even when he was not consciously searching for her, he never ceased expecting to meet her again. Beyond the next turn she stood, beckoning him, always.

At last, however, when he was nearly despairing of success, his unflagging efforts were granted one small meed of reward. He met and talked with an old Blackfoot chieftain who, while admitting that he knew the Indian maiden and The Lady of the Snows, as he called the white woman, steadfastly professed his complete ignorance of their purposes or whereabouts.

The Lady of the Snows! In this mysterious title she became to him more alluring than ever, his interest was even heightened. The spirit of remoteness, of mystery about her was only intensified by the beauty of her title. Yet it was all in keeping with her personality, and he felt convinced that fuller revelation would confirm his belief that she would be revealed

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to him finally, as the embodiment of higher perfection, and of supreme harmony.

Here, despite his ingenuity and untiring efforts, his search ended against a stone wall. It was as if she had never been. And, strangely enough, it never once occurred to him that behind his uniform failure to learn anything tangible there was a controlling power more potent than any he could bring into play.

Sometimes in the late afternoon, when his daily work was finished, he would find leisure to wander across the mountain passes. He never tired of the wonders they revealed. Each day fresh beauties were unfolded to his admiring eyes; each day the view of empurpled distances, of snow field or upland glacier, seemed more wonderful than the day before.

Venturing as far as was prudent, he climbed unexplored peaks and caught glimpses of gigantic waterfalls and rushing torrents of seething water. Sometimes a steep opened, and a green path bedecked with tiny red flowers, flaming like flakes of fire, surprised him with their loveliness.

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Many tranquil hours he spent thus in clambering over the stony slopes, or watching some magic vista from a dizzy height, stretching away to the ends of the world. And it was during just such a lonely jaunt that the unexpected happened, and the relinquished dream came true.



Chapter

9



HE came upon her so noiselessly that he stood watching her several seconds ere she was aware of his presence. His amazement at finding her in a spot so inaccessible and so remote from human habitation rendered him wholly at a loss how to act; his judgment was numb as to whether he should speak or remain mute, whether he should make his presence known, or wait until she observed him; he was overwhelmed with the revelation that here, poised upon the edge of an abyss and peering

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into its unmeasured depths with apparent calm and enjoyment, was the one woman in all the world.

He had never been an impressionable man where women were concerned, and indeed had always rather cultivated an unnatural exclusiveness toward the gentler sex; but when this woman faced him, surveying him with grave dignity and surprise, he thrilled with sudden consciousness of her youth and rare beauty.

Heavily booted as she now was, he saw that her short mountain dress bespoke a feminine fastidiousness that pleased the eye. Now that the light was clear, he saw that her features were rather strong, and that her firmly chiselled chin indicated self-reliance and power; but the softness of her brown eyes tempered the chin's sternness, and the delicate color which rose in her cheeks emphasized her youth and reminded him that he was staring like a boor.

Then, too, he had an uncomfortable feeling that she was passing judgment upon him, deliberately, and from the look in her eyes that the judgment was by no means flattering.

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Yet, though he took in all this in a glance, the fact that at last he had found her overshadowed for the moment every other consideration, and he started eagerly forward, determined that she should not escape him this time. Something of his perturbation must have shown in his face, for as he touched his cap she addressed him.

“As a stranger in this country,” she said easily, her face suddenly glowing with an animation that was like the awakening of a soul behind her cold beauty, “you are doubtless wondering that a woman should wander here alone. But, surely, since its fascination has drawn you, too, you can not deny its marvellous wonder and charm — and concede an excuse for my coming.”

There was the shadow of a smile upon her lips when she concluded, and her manner was as confident as though she were addressing a friend in the sunlit streets of a crowded city. To his mind her individual charm eclipsed all others, but some shred of sanity restrained utterance of this thought.

Now at her first words he had uttered an

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exclamation of surprise, and his face went crimson with the accession of some sudden emotion. Recovering himself by an effort, he stammered an answer, praising the view; one that, to judge by her expression, failed to raise the standard of her estimation of him.

But as he was steadily looking at her and not at the view at all, her frown of annoyance was further disconcerting.

Doubtless, however, she would have been more tolerant of his discomposure, though considerably astonished, could she have divined his cause; for at the first sound of her voice he had known. He could never have mistaken its low, soft pitch, nor its silvery melody, and it was this sudden conviction that had made his heart leap into his throat, and caused him to cut such a sorry figure before the one person of all others whom he was most anxious to impress favorably.

In finding the woman who had saved his honor that dark and stormy night he had also found his divinity of Lake Louise. The woman of the silver scarf and the Gloria of his dreams were one!



Chapter

10



IS instinct had not lied to him in the Valley of the Ten Peaks; it had told him that the face of the woman was lovely and that it would be given him sometime to behold it; but the consummation of his hopes had come without warning, he was so ill-prepared for the shock that it is no wonder he was thrown off his balance.

Her attitude toward him was oddly unconventional, an attitude which none of the women with whom he had been brought into

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contact had ever assumed; yet through it all she carried herself with supreme dignity. It was as if she tolerated his presence with outward politeness, while secretly annoyed by his intrusion. Somehow her complete confidence, instead of putting him at ease, only added to his embarrassment. He was at a disadvantage, and though he strove to answer her composedly, he was painfully sensible of his awkwardness.

As he joined her, she turned again to the view, seeming utterly to have forgotten his presence.

"Oh, the beauty of it!" he presently heard her murmur. "The glory! Where nature shows her snows and her forests. Where the splendid calm of mountain lakes is found, where the rose-colored rock fledged with pine rises out of the opal waters, and the whole of nature seems enchanted!"

Trevelyan did not reply, for in a measure he divined her mood and the train of thought inspired by the prospect. The few conventional words he might utter would not in the least express his own keen appreciation of the

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scene, nor the constant pleasure which its endless variety had so often afforded him.

The wisdom of his silence was presently acknowledged when she turned her dark eyes upon him and spoke with a manner that was less aloof.

"I trust you will overlook my unconventionality, for I am woefully ignorant of women and their ways in your English world. I fear I have shocked you by speaking at all."

"Heavens, no!" he made haste to protest. It was much that she should care for his opinion, and he spoke warmly. "I am the intruder. And, anyhow, can it be unconventional to speak under the spell of this enchantment? Surely the artificial laws of custom—of civilization—can not be permitted to bind and crush us here!"

"But, nevertheless, Society would neither ignore nor pardon," she calmly returned.

"Its judgment need not disturb us here," he persisted, watching her eagerly. "Surely we are safe from criticism."

"Is one safe from criticism anywhere?" she asked. "I wonder. Even in this world

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of motionless lakes and glacier walls thousands of feet high we could not escape."

"I hope," he said fervently, "you do not expect to find me as bad as that."

But though her sense of humor was aroused at this speech, she shook her head in negation even as she laughed, and he instinctively felt that she was going away from him; that she would again disappear, this time perhaps forever.

He was curiously disturbed by the thought; for the first time in his life he could not analyze his emotions or define their cause. His life for many years had been one of remarkable serenity, and heretofore he had enjoyed a masterly control of himself; now, apparently without rhyme or reason, he was rudderless and adrift in an unknown sea. He was bewildered. And yet he was sensible of a keen zest in living, a keenness that sent the blood racing through his body and set his nerves to tingling. He felt the full fascination of the woman beside him, and this time he determined to fathom her identity. His clearest idea resolved itself into a resolution

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not to let her go away from him until he had learned more about her.

Who was she? She was immeasurably above any of the people about them; of this he was positive. She stood alone, aloof; and yet, this being so, why was she here, indifferent to her surroundings, excepting as their beauty impressed her, and to all appearances perfectly familiar with a region with which she could have nothing in common? The details of her personality, as they gradually disclosed themselves, made her more of a mystery than ever.

There was nothing in the vicinity of Maple Crossing to attract the traveller, or to cause him to linger; there was a thousand times less reason why a woman of culture and refinement should seek out such a spot and deliberately remain there.

Though we Americans are not like the Hindoos, and do not wear the cord upon our breasts, our caste is none the less unmistakable. Was it in her speech that this difference lay, or in the intonation of her voice, or in her perfect bearing? He could not tell;

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but he knew of its existence. The delicate whiteness of her throat, where the soft coils of hair met it, only confirmed his conclusion; she was of no common clay, whatever she might be.

She had turned again to the view; he could no longer see her face; but he divined with unwelcome certainty that she was saying goodbye to the rose-tinted rocks and buttressing crags; bidding adieu to the illimitable leagues of rolling forest, rioting in shades of yellow and purple by day, and glowing in flames of golden red under the setting sun. It was now evident that she meant to ignore their former meeting. Could he, then, refer to it with propriety? His breathing quickened. What should he do? If he remained silent he might never see her again.

He was, after all, like every red-blooded, virile man, a creature of elemental passions, howsoever they might be glossed over with the veneer of civilization. His sense of her beauty was fully aroused, every fibre of his being responded to her womanhood, and she became to him a new and mysterious light.

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It was more than could be expected of any man to remain silent.

As she turned to pass him, he spoke. "Is it possible," he began gravely, "that you will leave me again with no explanation whatever?"

She looked quickly at him, but whether with kindling interest or a sudden misgiving he was unable to determine. The pink of her cheeks died out.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

Her voice was hard and cold, and he looked at her in surprise.

"Surely," he stammered, utterly nonplussed by her attitude, "you have not forgotten! I have thought of nothing since that night but your splendid pluck and bravery. For it was pluck, you know—the rarest sort. Not a woman in a million would have done what you did, and I have longed to tell you so."

She did not immediately respond, and as he waited his heart sank, because it was obvious that he had annoyed her. He stood upon the threshold, but the door was closed in his face.

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When she spoke her eyes were stormy.

"I had hoped," she said, "you would not refer to that night. Because you stumbled into my life by pure accident, no necessity of explanation devolves upon me." Her eyes flashed defiantly, and he realized that no protestation would help him. Her words confirmed his fear that she fully meant to pass out of his life, and drove him to a persistency that perhaps was rude. His joyous satisfaction at the meeting was abruptly tinctured with bitterness that she could so inconsequentially treat a matter that was to him of supreme importance. Whether she intended it or not, her speech and manner severely stung his pride and punctured his self-esteem, stirring his fighting blood to fever heat. Surely the depth of his emotion must strike some responsive chord in her breast. At any rate, whatever diffidence or uncertainty had marked his bearing up to this stage vanished, and he faced her boldly, albeit respectfully, thorough master of himself.

"You must answer me a question before you go," he said quietly, his level regard hold-

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ing hers. The color rose swiftly to her cheeks again.

"Must!" she flashed.

"Must," he repeated. "I trust I do not need to point out the obligation you were under to make yourself known, to clear up some very important aspects of the train-wrecking conspiracy that are still unexplained. How could you know but what your testimony was necessary to the conviction of the guilty men?"

For a moment she was at a loss. Here was an unlooked for reversal of the tables. But she quickly recovered herself and—significant fact—tried to justify herself.

"Had you needed my testimony," she returned, her color deepening, "I should have come forward. But you did not need it; I was watching the trial."

So far her look had not wavered; her eyes still met his unflinchingly. But somehow his steady, narrowed regard had become uncomfortably potent. He waited. Her eyelids all at once fluttered, fell.

"Of course," she said, in an unnatural voice,

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"I can not refuse to answer your question until I have heard it."

For a moment Trevelyan hesitated; he found it again necessary to master his emotions before proceeding. Then he said, feelingly:

"Before asking you anything, I must speak of the great debt I owe you. Words are so inadequate—so puerile—to express one's sentiments in such a case; still you must know that my sensibilities have been profoundly touched. I must leave to your own a fuller interpretation of what mere speech can not convey.

"My name is Charlton Trevelyan, and it is one that I carry with considerable pride. But for you that night it would now be worthless. Will you not let me thank you? Will you not tell me how I best can?"

"You owe me nothing," she said hurriedly. "And I have not the slightest interest in the repayment of what you call your debt."

There was no mistaking the tone of her voice this time; she was plainly annoyed and sought to end the interview. Her movement to go was unmistakable; still he barred the

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path and persisted. It was with forced calmness that he again addressed her.

"Then answer this question. Why did you feel interested enough to save me from everlasting disgrace if today you can only show me decided hostility? That reason, at least, I have a right to demand."

The girl's eyes challenged his with a light that needed no borrowed brilliancy, and he perceived the effort it cost her to speak calmly. But when she finally did, the clear, soft pitch of her voice was untroubled by the constraint that left her cheeks still stained.

"You know nothing of the circumstances that impelled me," she said, "and for various reasons it will be impossible for me to enlighten you further. But I will say this much: you owe me nothing. My interest was not in you personally, therefore the obligation is purely imaginary. What you mistake for bravery was—was nothing of the sort."

He was perplexed, baffled. She was so beautiful, so alluring, that his whole being was irresistibly drawn to her. Why should she so obstinately hold their relations upon

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such an uncompromisingly impersonal level, and by doing so keep herself enshrouded in a veil of mystery?

"What was it, then?" he asked simply.

Her face and eyes were troubled.

"That, too, is a question I can not go into," she replied. "Please try to accept this as an answer: In this country one follows one's destiny; self-development is as much of a woman's education here as it is of a man's. I can only say that I learned of the plot, and in consequence I was largely involved in the responsibility of frustrating it."

"True," he returned gravely. "But you warned me in time. I am an officer of the Mounted Police, employed by the Government to protect the people from just such outrages. In warning me most women would have considered that their responsibility had ended."

She was now contemplating him with a curious little smile, and for some occult reason she flushed hotly.

"You forget," she said, her tone unexpectedly gentle, "that I knew nothing of you

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personally. There was a great deal at stake, and I could take no chances."

He did not understand. "I am afraid I don't get your meaning," he said. She explained slowly:

"Your life was threatened; it meant almost certain death if you went to the rescue. I knew you were alone that night—and I preferred to take no chances."

His face went white. The implication was plain, and he was stung to anger.

"Simply because you did not know me," hotly, "your contempt branded me a coward out of hand." He plunged bitterly on, heedless of the shock his words were to her.

"Is this obligation of self-development, as you are pleased to brand it, enforced upon the women of Canada because of the men she breeds? Is it upon such a foundation that your standards are based? For your judgment of my sex is sweeping."

Her luminous eyes were flashing angrily, but she controlled herself tranquilly:

"Not of the entire sex, perhaps. But in a measure your anger is justified—because of

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what followed — and I shall not resent it. No doubt I presumed too far by interfering as much as I did.”

Then, without warning, she was dazzling him with her rare smile. But he was still smarting; he could not so soon forget; and the fact that she had questioned his courage, that she had not given his inclinations the slightest consideration, rankled deeply.

Indeed, his emotions were curiously complex. He was angry that her opinion could so disturb him, and at the same time he was conscious that he cared for it very much. He turned away from her and allowed his gaze to wander out over the glorious panorama, but saw nothing of it; it was as if a sea-mist had risen between to blind his eyes.

“I am sorry,” he went on presently, gravely regarding her once more, “sorry that your antagonism for a stranger should have acquired so much animus. You knew nothing of me, it’s true; but why should you have been so prejudiced? If we could own to the least mutual acquaintance I might accept, if I could not understand, your attitude; but you

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know nothing of me—I know nothing of you.”

“I know few Englishmen,” she murmured, not meeting his look.

“Granting that,” he went on severely, “and that the few you know have not inspired confidence, why should you direct your antagonism against me? You are treating me unfairly, and you know it. I performed my duty as soon as it was shown to me: does that not exonerate me a little in your eyes?” But as she remained silent, apparently irresolute, he added:

“Believe me, I shall be submissive if you now decide that my position is unwarranted. And I shall never trouble you again.” His face was very pale, and her own reflected a troubled look. She spoke rapidly, a trifle nervously.

“My reasons are strong for acting as I do; really, I have no choice in the matter. The explanation you desire, I must refuse. Can not you accept that assurance and believe that I am neither unjust nor unfeeling?”

He regarded her with a characteristic seri-

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ousness that robbed his speech of all impertinence.

“Very well. I shall never forget you, and I shall thank you all the days of my life for what you have done for me. Yet your reason for what you have done in my behalf is not flattering to my pride.”

Her beautiful features were still clouded with trouble, even distressed, and he observed that her composure was quite gone; but he deliberately set his face against her, resolving to dismiss her from his life, to forget her. Never would he press his presence upon her again, nor would he even watch the path she took. Their separation, the divergence of their path, were symbolical. There are obstacles, he assured himself hotly, that a gentleman can not attempt to surmount without demeaning himself.

So it was that he missed the half-frightened glance she bent upon him, and failed to catch the full significance of her constraint when she murmured “Good-bye.”



Chapter



A decorative shield containing a stylized letter 'W'. The shield is positioned to the right of the word 'Chapter' and is part of a larger, ornate decorative element that includes flowing, ribbon-like flourishes extending downwards and to the left.



SMOKY cloud dropped suddenly around Trevelyan, enveloping him in gray obscurity. So complete had been his absorption that he had not noticed its approach until a blast of icy wind cut his cheek; and in a twinkling the air was filled with flying snow, as fine as powder, that blotted out the prospect more effectually than night. In truth, beyond a yard or two in any direction there was nothing to be seen except a wall of swirling white. He was not without some experience with

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these sudden mountain snowstorms, and consequently he was instantly alive not only to his own danger, but to the woman's who had just left him. Unless one had a bloodhound's scent for a trail, to be caught shelterless and unprepared in one of these outbursts meant almost certain death.

If he, possessing a man's hardihood and being in a measure used to meeting similar predicaments, was in deadly peril, then what of her? Gloria—how could she hope to win through to a place of safety?

With a sinking heart, cursing himself for permitting his anger so far to overmaster him that he would permit her to go alone, he groped blindly for the trail, and finding it, went floundering and stumbling along in utter recklessness, where a misstep or a swerving too far to one side might have hurled him to certain destruction.

Then he began hoping and praying that she would sense her danger and not try to proceed, in which case he must soon overtake her. The trail was narrow and it would be impossible to pass her and not know it. What he meant

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to do then he did not consider. They would be together. Perhaps it meant to carry her until they arrived at a lower level, away from the storm's fury, or until they dropped by the way. But he must find her whatever else might befall; this idea kept hammering in his brain with maddening persistence.

And then something touched and clung to his arm. Above the shrieking wind he heard a voice, and through the veil of snow that rendered all things visible ghostily unreal, he saw her again.

"Thank God!" he shouted, so overpowering was the revulsion of his feelings, so inexpressible was his relief at the sight of her. But her first words were a part of the mystery of her individuality, and like every other aspect of her participation in his life, were of a nature further to prick his self-conceit.

"I came back," she gasped, "but I thought I would never find you. Come, come," she added rapidly. "You must hurry."

In his complete astonishment at the idea of her returning to find him, Trevelyan had stopped stock-still. He had grasped her arm

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to steady her, for she reeled under the wind's buffeting. But now she pulled him forward, and together they fought their way down the well-nigh invisible trail.

For the time being every artificiality of their conventional training was leveled; they were not even man and woman, but just two humans uniting their resources to combat an elemental condition. They were shivering with cold and every instant growing colder, and both were keenly aware that unless they found a haven soon they would speedily freeze to death. Once she voiced a twist of this thought that made him glow with joy.

"It is fate, I suppose," her clear voice rang out despite her panting; "we are doomed not to escape each other. The very elements conspire to throw us together."

And to keep us together forever, his brain added, though he did not utter the thought.

It seemed to him that they were hours throwing themselves against the storm, but a wonderful, inexplicable strength was sustaining him. He moved in a radiance that was never seen on sea or land. He forgot fatigue,

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he no longer heeded the cold or their peril, but was joyously conscious of the contact of her body. For a while, at least, all barriers had fallen from between them; but in the midst of his ecstasy he realized that this death-dealing storm would exact every ounce of their strength and endurance.

She pulled away from him once, as if propinquity, however desirable it might be to him, was distasteful to her; then he banished all consideration of mere personal feeling, either hers or his own, and deliberately placed his arm around her waist and held her closer. He knew the importance of physical contact in the intense cold.

He felt instinctively that she did not misunderstand his motive, for she did not try to draw away again, nor otherwise show resentment.

In the first rush of these characteristic storms a man is utterly helpless, and Trevelyan recognized that he was facing a losing fight at the very first. The snow clung to them and weighted them down, while slowly but surely the freezing wind crept into their bodies, be-

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numbing them with a constantly growing chill. His companion stumbled, showing signs of fatigue, and in a little while he could barely distinguish her voice, but he gathered that she knew of shelter and was trying to guide him to it.

By and by she abruptly drew him to a standstill—without reason, so far as he was able to see; but the next moment he dimly made out a light, apparently burning against the solid rock. They were before a small hut, built against the mountain-side. Here was shelter from the storm, at least.

Dread and anxiety fled as he pushed open the door. A final blast shrieked by, as though reluctant to lose them, and as it swept them in he saw and recognized the Indian girl who had taken Gloria away from him at the trestle. She was crouching on the floor in front of a brightly burning fire, over which a pot was bubbling and steaming, and filling the interior with an odor calculated to make a hungry man ravenous. At their entrance she sprang up and, running to Gloria, drew her tenderly down upon a bearskin rug, caressing her and

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crooning over her in her own tongue, and rubbing the benumbed members into life.

By a strenuous effort Trevelyan managed to close the door upon the wind, and then, exhausted, he fell back against it and blinked in a bewildered way at the scene. Gloria, under the influence of incipient stupor, accepted her maid's rough ministrations in a dazed fashion; but both were rapidly recuperating, and when the Indian girl brought each a bowl of hot soup from the steaming kettle, all ill effects of their experience disappeared.

Then Trevelyan's bewilderment gave way to amazement. The room was passably large and had been built with an eye to comfort, as was attested by a table, chairs, a sofa with many cushions in one corner, and a few rugs scattered about over the floor. Opposite the sofa stood a screen, which he afterwards learned concealed a tiny kitchen. A door opened upon a bedroom.

So plainly did he show his astonishment at these appurtenances of civilization that Gloria was moved to enlighten him.

"This is my tepee," she said, with manifest

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enjoyment of his amazement; "it belongs to Tonta and me, and you are our first visitor."

He looked at her incredulously. "Surely," he exclaimed, "you don't live here!"

"Oh, no," she answered, smiling; "we only come here for recreation. The cabin has been artfully contrived and was well concealed by the builders. We have never before suffered intrusion."

Trevelyan flushed scarlet at the word and moved toward the door.

"Then," he said, "I shall not be the first intruder."

But the girl sprang up with a startled cry.

"Don't! Perhaps I could have expressed myself better, but you are too keen to misjudge my meaning. It would be certain death for you to venture out tonight. Did I not go back and seek you? This night, at least, you shall be my guest, or"—as she saw him waver—"my prisoner."

In spite of her calm superiority of manner, which decidedly nettled him, he thanked her. He was far from being averse to accepting her command, for he knew of many men

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who had ventured forth into blizzards never to return.

She flashed a half-veiled, sidelong glance at him that was wholly delicious and charming.

"Please to observe, Mr. Trevelyan," she said in a low voice, "that the disadvantage is not with me — now."

For the first time, he felt, their odd relationship was free from strain and stress, and he laughed, the easy, spontaneous laugh that is one of the most revealing indices to a man's character. And it struck a responsive chord in her, for she regarded him, bright-eyed and smiling.

But she quickly grew sober again, though she spoke gently.

"Now curb your feverish impatience and let these hours that we must pass together be as pleasant as we can make them. I will make you a proposition: while Tonta is preparing supper, forget that you are my prisoner, and we will play at being friends."

"It's a great game," he drily interrupted.

"But only a game tonight," she added, quickly, and he was cast down by her patent

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earnestness. "This can be only a truce. Tomorrow morning you will go away, and if you are wise, will forget this night of storm and everything associated with it, as I shall. Come. Is it a bargain?"

He strode over to her and said, beneath his breath:

"It is not so easy for me to forget as it seems for you, so I can not truthfully promise. As for the rest, be it as you will; only bear in mind that we seem to be unable to avoid each other, even when we try. Fate has sent you to me again, and this time I shall make no pledges."

Her white throat gleamed in the firelight and her fine eyes sparkled under their long veiling lashes.

"Perhaps," she returned, "tonight, you will learn a lesson, and cease being inquisitive about me." But her accompanying laugh was nervous. She added: "I am only one of the very small workers in the world: what more would it interest you to know?"

He did not answer; to him her speech was flippant, and his mood was very serious.

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“Come,” she went on, pointing to a cushion facing her across the fire glow; “sit there, and I shall tell you all my family history—all you need to know. But remember—curiosity once killed a cat. The old adage doesn’t say so, but I am sure it was *satisfied* curiosity that proved so fatal.”

He could not resist her fascination, and, wondering at it, he sank down upon the cushions.



Chapter

12



UTSIDE, the wind howled and shrieked and tore at the windows, as if infuriated at having been cheated of its prey. It drove madly against their shelter, heaping and packing the snow against the door, much of which sifted through crevices and melted upon the floor. Occasionally icicles would be torn loose from the rocks above and precipitated upon the roof with a startling clash and clatter, and now and then they heard the thunder of a distant avalanche.

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But the room was warm and tranquil, and the fire glowed and snapped and sprayed its flickering light over the woman's dainty figure, and the man concluded that it was not so unpleasant after all, this playing friends.

She leaned back among the furry skins and cushions piled high behind her, and for a space closed her eyes. Her cheeks were pink in the ruddy glow, and the wisps of hair about her forehead were transmuted to polished copper.

All at once she opened her eyes, and he saw that they were star-like in their brightness, and as she sat upright she addressed him.

"My first visitor! And oh, such a solemn one!"

Trevelyan smiled in spite of himself; she was only a girl, in truth,—proud and high-spirited, maybe, but yet only a girl—and he had no inclination to combat her changing humors. He unbent and leaned toward her.

"Well," he returned, easily, "I too will play the comedy. You are laughing at me, I know, but perhaps that's the privilege of friendship; for we are friends—tonight.

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Now for your life's history! after which, as a natural sequence, I suppose mine must follow."

"Where shall I begin?" she laughed.

"At the very beginning. But first, the subject of your narrative must be readily identified—so, what is your name, and how old are you?"

She challenged him with another laugh.

"You are not fair," she said, gaily. "The first question I sha'n't answer, and the second is impolite."

"Then," he flung back, "for the time being, I suppose I must be satisfied with 'Gloria.' It is a beautiful name, if incomplete. As for your age—pardon me, your youth—you are frightened."

"Gloria!" she gasped, startled. "How did you know?"

"Never mind," quizzically. "I'm not going to be communicative until I see how far your present mood will carry you. I know that Gloria is your name; how I know it doesn't matter."

"But it—" she began, and stopped, blush-

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ing furiously. Her gaze fell, and she sat in silent confusion.

"But, what?" he urged, puzzled at this unaccountable turn.

"Nothing," she said, still ill at ease. "I was about to leave you an opening by resenting a familiarity. But 'Gloria' is permissible between friends. Tell me why you think I am frightened."

He had a misgiving that she had evaded something, but could not guess what it might be; so after a doubtful inspection of her delicate features, already turned composedly to him, he said:

"You are entirely dominated by the head; you never allow the heart to play any part in your life."

"Well," she seemed to be giving the idea serious consideration, "neither admitting nor denying your assertion, isn't that the wisest way?"

"No. I deny emphatically that cold reason is always wisdom."

"What, then, should govern one, pray?"

"Why, I think the temperature of the blood

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should count, sometimes." His look was full of meaning, and she once more blushed.

He could not be sure, though, that he had gained much, for there was a mischievous sparkle in her eyes as she retorted:

"Then I would conclude from your speech that you are warm-hearted, have a fiery disposition, and therefore are incapable of judgment at all."

Some dim foreknowledge of the future seemed to come to him as he gazed down at her, notwithstanding her cleverness at parrying his attempts to penetrate her reserve, and he had no thought of giving up. Instead, he said with assurance:

"Have your own way for tonight. I do not pretend to be a magician or a diviner, but I believe you will never go out of my life again."

Her face was very lovely in the soft fire-light, but at this speech the smile faded from her lips. Across the warm mood of laughter a chill fell. He was watching her closely, and was grieved to see the friendly light of her eyes give way to a sudden flash. But her

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speech, save that it was a bit constrained, betrayed no change of temper.

"Although we are only playing at friendship," she said, "you are testing my hospitality frightfully; take care that it doesn't break under the strain." Then with another abrupt shift of humor she dazzled him again with her smile. "Take what the gods allow and demand no more," she concluded, "lest you receive nothing."

"You speak as from some cloud-capped tower," returned he, still trying to keep pace with her changing moods, "and I, poor mortal, so far below, can only listen, and wonder at your oracles."

This answer pleased her; in the proper spirit had he received her offer. And he saw between the warm rosiness of her lips the gleam of white teeth, and heard the musical voice saying:

"Oh, foolish man! Fate and Destiny are one, and Destiny has decreed that you are to be my prisoner tonight. I have made my terms: no questions asked. Shall I resort to chains or the dungeon, to persuade you to a

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tractable frame of mind, or will you be sensible and accept?"

She was warm, radiant, fragrant in her nest of rugs and cushions. Behind her raillery and metaphor he read a serious intent. He surveyed her loveliness, the brilliant eyes, the red lips, the coppery hair, the fine white hands, and the long flowing lines of her figure; he realized that if he did not accept her terms, if he failed to meet her upon the level of her own choosing, she had the power—and would use it—to make their enforced immurement decidedly uncomfortable for him. She read his hesitation and went on, before he could respond:

"You accept? Then listen: Here amid the mountains, in this enchanted country, I am a thing to be feared. For I am The Lady of the Snows! The Indians, giving me this title, say my power is great and that no man's hand can frustrate my will. In their tepees they whisper of my power and bid all listeners beware. Be this as it may, I love the title they have given me and the illusion that it brings to them. And here in this tiny cabin, aloof

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from all humanity, Tonta and I spend many hours of soft content, dreaming wonderful dreams, and seeing visions no man can fathom. Sometimes the world below is visible in the tranquil purple of a great stillness, with scarcely a leaf stirring. But even then we hear above us the shudder of an unborn storm! In the deep silence of the mountains we catch the faint first breath of the tempest; and then we stand straight and motionless, waiting in awe for its true birth. And when the swirling white of the mysterious snow comes in its fascination, wrapping us securely in its embrace, we live in a world of wonder. The Indians tell me it is dangerous to risk the nights and days when these snow storms come, but our friends are watching and seek us if we stay too long, and so I never fear at all — but I am not always idle here for I come of fighting stock; in my veins runs the blood of the French chevaliers and of Madeleine Verchères, she who at fourteen held a garrison a week against the savage Iroquois; but lest that is not enough to frighten you, hearken to more.

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“One of my grandmothers was a chieftain’s daughter, so that coursing in my veins is the red man’s blood. And mark you, this is no idle boast of one Canadian born; for though nearly all families cherish some of these traditions, and are prolix in their telling, I have the proofs.”

“Your bearing and your actions are proof conclusive of your words,” he said, very earnestly. “Twice you have saved me from serious peril. And now I understand the reason: your bravery is inherent; and it is at last quite clear to me why you love the wilds, why you seek the mountain-tops alone.”

“This is my country,” she returned, musingly, “and the wildness in my blood but makes me love it more, I think. Yet,” she gravely added, “it is no place for the weak and idle. Our people walk upright, as becomes free men and women; but my country demands as much as she offers, and exacts payment in full before one can enjoy her thoroughly.”

She spoke as one who knew, absolutely free from affectation, and the very simplicity of

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her utterance carried conviction. As if swayed by a sudden impulse, she continued:

"Mr. Trevelyan, as an Englishman you perhaps know little of Canadian women, and it may be that you have no interest in them; but I should like you to know that whatever our faults we are never idle. The idler, whether man or woman, is the measure of Canadian contempt. Women of Canada want men. I mean by that, not the automatons we see daily passing for such, but workers, thinkers, masters, builders. And we look to our own sex to uplift as well."

How curiously like the first words he had heard her utter at Lake Louise! Then, as now, she was unconscious of how deeply they affected him; but they did affect him, and his face flushed scarlet as he listened. He knew that, if she were to learn of his slothful past, her contempt for him would be sweeping, definite. But she was not done speaking, and he again gave her his undivided attention.

"Today on the mountain-top I refused you my name. It seemed then quite unnecessary that you should know it, and even now I can

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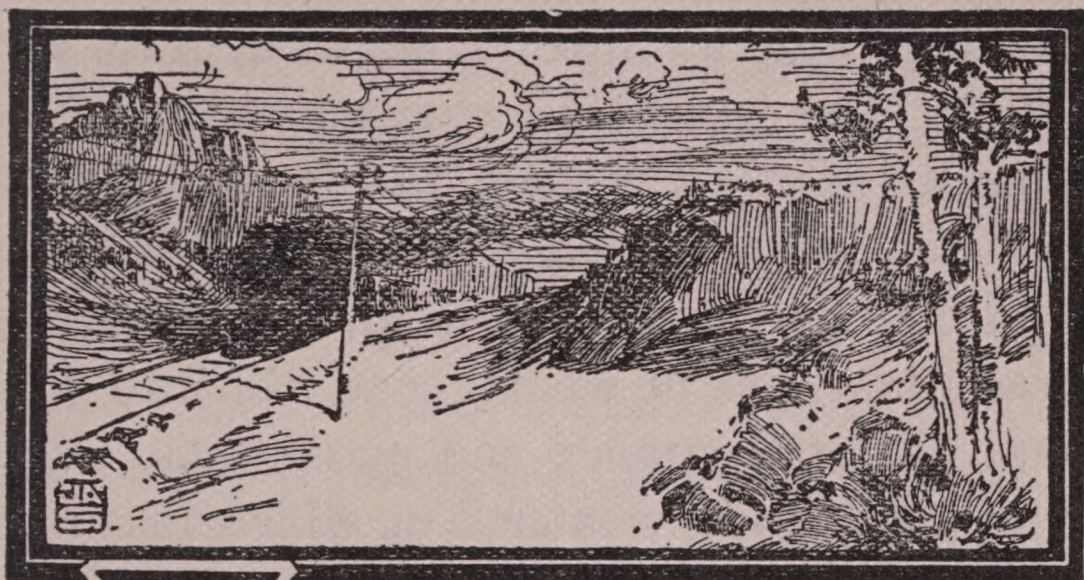
see no reason why you should care to hear it; but you are my guest, you have asked the question, and in common courtesy I will not refuse longer.

“I am Gloria Templeton, a Secret Service Inspector, employed and paid by the Government.”



Chapter

13



REVELYAN was stunned, incapable of understanding. The idea was too preposterous to be possible. That G. Templeton, the Indian Inspector, and this beautiful, refined girl before him were one and the same was simply unbelievable. And even as he took the tiny gold star she handed him, which attested the truth of her words, he stared dazedly at it, still speechless and uncomprehending.

Yet, she was sitting opposite him, amused at his stupefaction, as if the declaration she

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had so serenely uttered was not about the most extraordinary that such a young woman could make.

Then, little by little, he began to grasp the thing. The fact fully accounted for her presence at Maple Crossing, and he understood for the first time that his efforts to find her had been purposely obstructed. Here, verily, was a new type of woman, one which to him was distinctly strange and marvellous. She was not a "new woman," of which peculiar—but not rare—*avis* he entertained a dimly terrifying conception, because unlike the English suffragette she did not offensively thrust her views upon a defenseless audience; she evidently was too busy realizing them. In Saskatchewan, a few months before, he had met the daughter of an army officer who had talked Rights to him, and bored him exceedingly. But this girl—Gloria—Gloria Templeton—was unlike any other he had ever met or dreamed of. Buoyant and courageous out here on the borderland, where women apparently had many burdens, she showed her wings of strength in the calm confidence of

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ultimate success. Her eternal optimism was visible in her every utterance, and was one of her chiefest charms. Soft-voiced, gentle, cultivated, exquisite, one could scarcely conceive of a greater anomaly than her professed calling, and yet her work had proved her exceptionally capable.

I cannot pretend to explain the power and witchery carried by a pair of brown eyes, but when the whole face is glorified by a distracting blush, as beautiful as the dawn, and the low forehead is crowned by a wonderful mass of brown hair rippling in shades of coppery gold, you can imagine, I am sure, his confusion.

"After all," she went on, simply, her gaze upon the fire, "when you know the facts, what I have just told you will not seem so remarkable. My father also represented the Government, was for many years one of its most efficient agents, and all of my earlier years were spent on the borderland. I learned to know the Indians better than my own race. I was formally adopted into the Blackfeet tribe; I have lived with them for months at

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a time, which will account for my intimate knowledge of their habits of life and thought, and such influence as I may have over them. Tonta is my foster sister.

“So you will see how naturally I fell into the position I now occupy. I was thoroughly familiar with my father’s work; indeed, we followed it together, and I merely took up his share where he laid it down.”

He could only look at her in sheer admiration, and as it was an admiration too obviously sincere and irrepressible to contain any element of flattery, the girl was correspondingly embarrassed. She broke the pause.

“But it must seem odd to you, who have spent all your life in London, to find yourself settled here amid novel, unfamiliar surroundings, and where you are constantly meeting and dealing with strange conditions. Each one is a fresh experience to you — and, I trust educative.

“I, too, know something of city life; I have seen a little of the social unrest of the pampered rich town woman, with her energies dammed in upon herself, wretched from idle-

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ness and lack of the wild joy of living. I served a year in a hospital where such women came to be treated for nerves."

His mind was still too full for speech, and he was well content to sit and watch and listen to her. That she was beautiful beyond any womanly loveliness he had ever before seen, the first glimpse of her had told him; and now, talking with her, he discovered that she was built on long lines mentally. He found her possessed of an impulsive vitality that inspired him. With her generous warmth and her smiling eyes, she seemed to hold in her hand the solution of a thousand problems.

Abruptly she was transfigured by a return of her former gaiety.

"And now," she said brightly, "what have you to tell me?"

But a powerful constraint had seized upon him that was fatal to frankness on his part. Knowing her deep-rooted sentiments as he did, and after having hearkened to her inspired exposition of them, it is not remarkable that he should be reluctant about laying before her his idle years. In truth, he was

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filled with shame at the very idea. So he responded lamely and uneasily, slurring that portion of his life that he was no longer proud of.

"After listening to your story," he said in a low voice, "mine will be the quietest and tamest of tales. I lived in England until I was twenty-six, and I have no history. As I have already told you, my name is Charlton Trevelyan; I am an officer of the Mounted Police, but until a year ago I had not the faintest conception of what life meant."

The girl, listening, made no comment; but if he read her expression aright, she was disappointed at this bald chronicle; it was as if she believed he had purposely held back much that was material and that she ought to be told. But yet he could not credit her with this degree of interest in him, and he set down the change as one more of her baffling moods, one that added to her mystery and allurements.

They had eaten supper and, when his brief annals were told, they sat in silence, her eyes brooding upon the fire, while his never left

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off watching her face. Presently she lifted her head, a motion with her always imperious, then rose quickly to her feet and went over to the window.

"See!" she cried, "the storm has passed."

Neither had noticed it.

Through the small panes they could see the scurrying clouds, white as fleece, and the full moon showering the world of mountains with silver. Snow beset as they were, the weird, broken expanse of mystic white was too sublime not to impart a certain pleasure. It was a scene, with its complementary mood, never to be forgotten by either.

"Miss Templeton," Trevelyan at last broke the silence, "you are going away soon to resume your duties, and you have said that you do not want me to seek you again—why?"

"Is it necessary to give a reason?"

Wrought with delicacy as were the sure lines of her profile—she had not turned from the view—he was impressed with their firmness and strength, and deep in his heart a conviction blossomed that never was a woman

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more worth fighting for, and winning. Outwardly he was quite calm, but within was a fire of resentment that she should so persistently keep him at a distance. Said he:

“As you have remarked, Fate or Chance—call it what you will—has twice thrown us together. To me—and I mean no disrespect in saying it—you have given ideas and brought an influence which I never expect to lose.”

She turned as if to interrupt, but meeting his regard and reading there his seriousness, did not speak.

“I repeat,” he went on, “you have said things tonight that I can never forget; you have given me an insight into the character of the women of the West that I never dreamed of; and I believe you are too broad to refuse to know me, just because we have not met in the conventional way.”

She renewed her contemplation of the farther peaks, but was entirely conscious of his watchfulness of herself. It made her uncomfortable. She must answer; she must say something.

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"It's not that," she began; "but what reason can there be for continuing a chance acquaintance?"

She tried to meet his gaze steadily, but it was like facing a searchlight.

"For my part," he coolly asserted, "there would be every reason; but from your standpoint alone I can well see that you have nothing to gain. I was appealing to your generosity, and I persist in the face of every obstacle you may raise. I feel that you have no right to refuse, simply because of the past lying between us."

She started, and her eyes searched his countenance with a sudden apprehensive eagerness.

"Past!" she exclaimed, in a whisper. "What past? What do you mean?"

He was once more puzzled by her manner. Catching her fugitive glance, he held it a moment before replying.

"Why the fact that once you saved my honor and that tonight you have saved my life."

The laugh that met this contained a note of

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relief. But he did not understand, and smiled back, daringly, triumphantly. She could not have laughed if she was resolved to refuse.

“What a remarkable plea!” she mocked. “Because I have twice done you a service, you insist that I owe you another—something more.”

This illogical argument that entirely ignored his premise did not deter him, and he in the end won a reluctant consent to meet him again—some time: he considered it advisable not to press her too far just now.

With that they bade each other good-night—she and her Indian maid retiring to the second room, while he wheeled the couch in front of the fire for his own bed. And as he lay wakeful, his brain and heart stirred with emotions and thoughts far too active and complex for sleep, he planned long arguments for the next day, that would break down and destroy the barrier she persisted in holding between them.

When Trevelyan awoke, it was with a shock of surprise that he should have slept at all; he seemed to have been awake the entire

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night; but it was broad day, the sun was streaming across his couch, and he stepped out cautiously, lest he waken the lady of his dreams.

Outside, it was as if he glimpsed the lesser glories of Paradise: the fresh sparkling snow, the brilliant, cloudless sky, the far-off peaks swimming in a sea of translucent blue, the perfect silence that wrapped all nature, were immaculate symbols of Peace and Purity.

And then he saw in the snow a woman's fresh footprint, and his heart seemed to sink into some bottomless abyss, and there cease beating; for that footprint, and the others which his startled glance soon discovered, all leading away from the cabin, told him that she and Tonta had gone. And when he found her note upon the table he sat a long time holding it in his hand, trying to revive his dashed spirits and muster up courage to read it. The expectant joy of the morning was gone for him.

The mountains in their robes of snow suddenly became disagreeable to his sight, the sky with its brilliant blue, and the white

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clouds like shimmering veils, were positively ugly to his eyes.

She had meant what she said, then; she would pass from his life without giving him another thought; the night would slip from her memory as lightly as she had bade him dismiss it from his. But as he held her unopened note in his hand he knew the recollection of that night would remain with him always, that its radiance would live forever in his heart, whether he saw her again or not. Then he read her letter.

It held for him one tiny gleam of hope: she promised to give him one day; promised it grudgingly, even unkindly, still it was a promise. "You hold my word," she had written, "and though in calmer thought I regret its giving, the day shall be yours. However, remember," she had added maliciously, "the time and place shall be of my own choosing. It may be at once, and it may be years hence; of that I alone shall be judge. When I am ready, Tonta will find you. Till then, I beg of you, forget

GLORIA TEMPLETON."



Chapter

14



HIGH above the foaming river, the national buildings at Ottawa were radiant in the evening glow. Northward, across the tawny flood, the Chelsea Hills of the Laurentian Range uplifted their shaggy heights.

In the valley between a rainbow might have been shattered, for the ground was a garden of wild flowers right down to the river brim. And over all was the glory of the setting sun.

The dull gray stone walls of the convents and churches, with their pointed towers, were

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transfigured into burnished gold, and every glass in the windows facing the west was a flaming oblong.

Slowly the blazing glory faded to a duller red; the purple shadows gathered and deepened into gray darkness; and with the dropping of night there flashed from the lofty tower of the Parliament Building a finger of dazzling white light. It informed the people far and near that their representatives were assembled for the purpose of considering some matter involving the Dominion's welfare.

The House of Commons had hearkened that day to a man whose wisdom they admired and whose advice they frequently sought, and the speaker's resounding eloquence was still casting its spell about his hearers. For His Grace, the Archbishop of Quebec, had been invited to address them on a subject that lay near to his heart—Reciprocity with the great nation to the south.

As he stood before them, Catholic and Protestant alike regarded him with profound respect. He represented to the fair-minded

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a line extending from Champlain to Frontenac, and that line was illuminated by heroic deeds of the Catholic clergy.

It was quite dark when the Archbishop concluded his address and left the House. He was in a contented frame of mind, for he knew the interest in his hobby, that had been so long and so slowly kindling, was at last fully aroused; the members would sit late, discussing and debating his speech.

Hilaire du Bertrand saw visions and dreamed dreams of his country's greater future, and he worked with unabating zeal for their fulfillment. His intellectual brow, his piercing eye, his firm mouth and strong chin invested his visage with a rare force and dignity, and his utterances carried weight. He accepted the respect and admiration that had been this day accorded him, not as a tribute to himself, but, in the simplicity of his nature, to his riper knowledge and broader understanding of a subject upon which they were less informed only because they had not taken the trouble to study it. He gave himself no credit for the fact that his dream seemed

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about to be realized; his philosophy respecting it was as simple as himself: Right was an invincible force, requiring only to be understood to prevail; Reciprocity was right; therefore it needed but a medium to present it to the people, and the rest would follow of its own accord. He had been the humble instrument to start a great force working for the common good; political juggling and other selfish interests might delay, but no earthly power could alter, the final outcome.

So, with his mind well satisfied and his heart full of gratitude over the promising condition of his hobby, His Grace directed his thoughts to another matter that was occasioning him considerable concern. This was his ward, Patricia Sutherland.

In the education of his ward he had laid particular stress on the cultivation of self-reliance. And he had given her an incentive in life by developing in her a love of philanthropy. Believing women—and especially society women—tire of the frivolities, and are happier for some solid background, he had taught the little Patricia that her love for

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the Indians might do much good; and as an ardent Catholic she thought that she was educating them was giving her much satisfaction. Of late years, the wisdom of his labor was bearing fruit: she was able to decide all questions for herself. Yet now he felt, for the first time, her self-reliance would cause him trouble because for the first time their ideas were diametrically opposed as to what constituted the best for her. His ideas for her happiness were completely at variance with her own.

To begin with, her letters of late were not of their accustomed tone; just wherein the difference lay his clear-seeing vision had been unable to determine, and this, with the certainty that there was a change, troubled him. It seemed to him that she was writing around whatever was uppermost in her mind, instead of expressing herself candidly and fully, as had been her wont. He was disappointed that her attitude toward Trevelyan was still inflexible, and he shrank from the conclusion that she was unnecessarily hard and unjust for a girl of her years and intelligence. The

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sweeping change the young man had made in his life, notwithstanding the fact that her principal grounds of objection had thereby been removed, had not in the least softened her toward him. If anything, she was firmer than ever in her determination not to see him, and during her frequent weeks with her guardian, for her home was really with him, she evaded the topic as much as possible. The Archbishop now recalled many scraps of conversation from their various interviews during the past months and mentally reviewed them; but the exercise afforded him little joy.

One in particular he remembered: they were seated at dinner. The table was glittering with crystal and silver, and brilliant with light, flowers, and spotless napery; facing him, white-throated and bare-armed, sat Patricia Sutherland.

He had chided her with being hard-hearted.

"Never to you, Uncle," she had smiled back.

"Your filial love would not let you feel otherwise," His Lordship had observed, re-



“You have health and brains, Patricia, and you have beauty,”
said the Archbishop

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garding her affectionately. "And because you are like a daughter to me, my thoughts are troubled about your marriage."

She had met this with a shrug of her pretty shoulders that was altogether charming. "Uncle," she had lightly retorted, "you know how busy I am and how I love to be with you; these rare moments pilfered from my work are just the happiest and most restful I know; then why spoil our pleasure by bringing up a distasteful subject?"

Distasteful—he had not liked the word, and it had pained him to observe that she meant it.

On another occasion he had said:

"You have health and brains, Patricia, and you have beauty such as God gives his creatures only for good purposes. Why will you not meet Charlton Trevelyan?"

"There is time enough for that before the marriage," had been her impatient answer.

"My dear, there should be no consideration of marriage unless you find congeniality, and"—whimsically—"you can not discover that at such a distance."

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"There is no necessity of studying each other. I am willing to fulfill my part of the bargain, and he wants the money."

"Patricia," the Archbishop had sadly rejoined, "I am an old man, and I know something of youth. Believe me, you have mistaken the Englishman."

"I think not," had been her calm reply. "I know the variety."

"You must at least admit that he is trying to do something with his life," he had urged.

"I will not admit it," she said, hotly. "He is doing it only for a purpose, I believe. He is shrewd and wise, and has already partly won you by the trick."

"How bitter you are, Patricia."

Red and white roses had warred in her cheeks as she answered him: "No, I am only truthful. I shall never believe in him, never respect him; but I shall marry him."

"Ah," His Grace had said, rising with her, "if you are so determined, I can only wait and pray. But you are mistaken in one thing you said, Patricia. You asserted he was winning me, while he has already won. I sur-

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rendered completely before I had known him two weeks."

However, as he considered the troublesome subject in all its perplexing aspects, a possibility was finally suggested to him which in a measure abated his worry. He knew the girl's intense pride, and fully comprehended its nature. It was the sort of pride that is free from vanity and self-conceit, and upon which lofty ambitions and pure purposes flourish to complete fruition.

Now, it might be that she was battling with that pride, and if such were the case the struggle was a bitter one, which outside interference could only intensify. She must be left to fight it out alone, His Grace being convinced that the very instinct now up in rebellion would in the end guide her aright.

In a letter to Trevelyan, he wrote that night: "Young people of the present day are, to my mind, too self-centered, and my ward, in her determination not to see you yet, is a little unreasonable. I have told her that I am already your ally, and I may say here that the alliance is being strengthened by the news

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I get of you. Indeed, for a young man whose attention has never been turned to the practical things of life, I can say without flattery that you have proved your worth, that your instincts were sound, and that your ambition and your will to carry it out were only asleep.

"You evidently were born with common sense; that, I am sure, is the secret of your success. Without it you never, in so short a time, could have secured such a hold in Canada.

"But this is irrelevant to my letter's purpose. It is now my intention to visit the farming districts, to learn how the farmers stand on the new propositions I have to offer relating to Reciprocity. Can you arrange to meet me? I shall write you more specifically of my movements as soon as my itinerary is determined."

His Grace, it will be observed, neglected to mention the very significant circumstance that Patricia Sutherland was going to accompany him on the journey.

But even had he done so, it would have made little difference to Trevelyan; his

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thoughts were now wholly absorbed by another.

And the weeks were passing: the broad lands were yielding succulent increase. Slowly, but surely, Trevelyan was climbing the steps of success; and at the top he saw the smiling face of the woman who loved power—the woman who, though scornful, had promised to meet him again—and her beautiful countenance was that of Gloria Templeton!



Chapter

15



AFTER the night in the mountain cabin Trevelyan lived in a state of constant expectancy for days on end, though he made shift to follow his work, and never neglected it in the smallest detail; for it seemed to have become a wholesome characteristic of the man that, though he had awakened late to life's responsibilities, he never after forgot them. Yet there was not a waking moment that he was not alert for Tonta's coming.

But as day after day passed, and the two

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women seemed to have disappeared as completely as they had at first, he was obliged to believe that Miss Templeton had meant exactly what she said: that the day would be given, when and where she chose. The days grew into weeks, and the belief was forced upon him that she had gone back to her duties.

Could it be possible that she had been laughing at him?—that she really meant to let time slip indefinitely by, without telling him how to find her? What a fool he had been to trust her so implicitly! She had interested him more than anybody he had ever met; for a long time he was unwilling to admit that the feeling was more than this; yet if it was nothing more than interest, why was he so sore and restless at her delay? Why was he positively panic-stricken at the thought that he might never see her again?

She had outwitted him, and had planned the deception even while they talked together.

And he, with a man's stupidity, had not even guessed it, he said bitterly to himself. Each morning he hoped anew; each night came fresh disappointment and dull despond-



He looked into the inscrutable eyes of Tonta

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ency. And so three months came and went. And then at the moment when his hope was quite gone, like a bolt from the blue, it returned. One morning he looked up from his writing into the inscrutable eyes of Tonta, the Indian maid!

She would see him early the next day.

Trevelyan could hardly wait. Never had the minutes dragged so sluggishly; never had they been so horribly tiresome and empty; never had his nerves been so on edge. But dawn came at last, and with it the promise of a fair day. She joined him at the place appointed, and the sight of her was gladdening, beyond his fondest anticipations. She came swiftly toward him, and he delighted again in the imperiousness of her manner. The freshness of her beauty struck him anew, and the white dress she wore intensified the shadows of her hair and eyes. Her steady gaze was as unfaltering as his own, however, and her first words were something of a shock to him.

“I have come as I promised,” she began, evenly, “but I have come against my better

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judgment. And now that I have done so, will you not release me?"

His joy was too great to be all at once chilled.

"You are not greeting me very civilly," he smilingly returned. "I understand that a promise here in the West is as good as a bond; will you break yours if I do not release you?"

"Certainly not!" she flung at him, haughtily—and hotly.

"Then"—triumphantly—"I shall not release you."

She eyed him coldly. "What then do you propose doing?" she asked.

He kept his temper and quite ignored the implied hostility of her manner.

"What a Shylock you must think me!" he deprecated. "But, really, don't you know, I haven't the strength of will to let you off so lightly. Think of the days and weeks you have kept me waiting! See! I have brought luncheon. Let us climb up the mountain."

"As you please." She bowed distantly, and for a while they walked in grim silence.

At last Trevelyan spoke. Resentment at

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her treatment of him had risen in his breast during the silent pause, and he addressed her with determination.

"Miss Templeton, this is such a little time you have granted me, and though I have held you to your promise, can not we play at enjoyment, as before? You owe me that, in common fairness."

The girl did not reply.

"I want to tell you," Trevelyan pursued, "that since that night on the mountain I have thought much of what you said about life. You have made me believe that no man with red blood in his veins can live here and not feel the truth of your words."

And still his companion said nothing. But as she turned and looked fully at him, there was a little cynical smile upon her lips, telling him that once more she was misjudging him. The blood flooded his cheeks, and he curbed the sharp rebuke that sprang to his lips.

"Miss Templeton," he said, quietly, "men are frequently misunderstood. Once upon a time there was a man named La Salle, and great as he was people did not, or would not,

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understand him, because he gave himself up to an idea."

"Well," she returned, "La Salle at least tried to live up to his idea. He desired to found an empire in the West. It is not often such an opportunity comes to a man; had he succeeded, ah, what could he not have been! But even in failure," she added sharply, "he was great because he was sincere."

Her voice was very earnest, but its unfriendly tone puzzled him completely. How heartily she disliked his race! His own voice was slightly strained as he answered her.

"Yes, but the spirit of the West is success, you must admit, and the man who fails is always forgotten."

"I do not agree with you," said she, coolly, "but I do concede that the true spirit of the West is success. However, is not success often brought about by the struggling efforts of the many? And is not the final reaching of the goal frequently made possible by the brave men who have tried and, in the world's thought, failed?"

The man gazed at her, partly in wonder

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at her warmth, but more because of her words. Said he:

"You come of a brave race and your creed is inspiring; in it there is no room for failure."

"Do you not feel the truth of what I say?" the girl insisted. "Life here can never be humdrum; whatever else it is, it is never that. And it possesses one predominating characteristic: there are no weak spots to bury out of sight."

"I believe you are right," he slowly returned, ignoring her covert sneer. "And the distance to London now marks the whole limit of my life."

"Does it seem so long?"

"Yes. A year and a half has revolutionized my life entirely."

And then she observed, with seeming irrelevancy: "England would not be a bad place in which to live, were it not for two things."

"What are they?"

"Englishmen and fog."

It was lucky for Inspector Trevelyan that he was gifted with a sense of humor. For, though it stung, he laughed aloud, and in the

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presence of such open merriment it was extremely difficult for the girl to retain her hostile pose. Her color heightened and she stared fixedly at the shimmering, sparkling snows high above them.

Woman is the most potent force in the world to shape a man's life. He may never acknowledge the fact; indeed, it is his nature loudly to disclaim it; but though ambition, inspiration, power, and the measure of his self-indulgence,—and failure and success as well—may be largely matters of heredity, it is the woman he desires above all others who makes or mars the man.

Trevelyan did not trouble to dissect his convictions in this respect, but as he stood beside Gloria Templeton some such thoughts were passing through his mind, and unconsciously gathering strength to mould his speech. He had been in her company but twice in his life, yet she had already influenced him as no other woman had, and as he was quite sure no other woman could. But why must he always be on the defensive with her? Why was she so determinedly aggressive?

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He did not recognize what prompted him, but all at once he felt compelled to speak openly. Against his will, he was swayed by an irresistible impulse to tell her just why he had come to Canada. After hearing him, without doubt she would find ampler justification for her contempt than the crime of his having been born an Englishman; but still he wanted her to know.

He made a quick decision; he would speak, no matter what the consequences might be. As far as he was concerned, there could be only peril in half measures between them; and no matter how she might look upon the sorry aspects of his engagement, and the poor figure he cut regarding it, she must be told.



Chapter

16



HE was seated upon a boulder, and he was lying at full length at her feet. They were resting before resuming their climb.

While apparently engrossed in the magnificent prospect of mountain and valley, she contrived to subject him to a pretty thorough scrutiny. The broad-brimmed "Stetson" became his lean, bronzed face, and the clear blue eyes were certainly pleasant to see. His long, clean lines signified uncommon physical strength and suppleness. As a woman she

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could not avoid taking heed of all these details, and her mind was uncomfortably agitated that she should notice them.

He glanced keenly at her intelligent face, and, as always, was thrilled with her wonderful beauty. But his admiration was tempered by a consciousness of her unfriendly spirit—never had he encountered one so plainly marked. He roused himself abruptly to say:

“Miss Templeton, please look at me.”

She did so, openly, with a start of surprise and with an air of grudgingly conferring a favor. Then he went on:

“It is not charity to discredit one as you do me—and without the slightest shadow of excuse, either.”

This unexpected attack startled her. She winced, and a wave of color swept across her face.

“Would it alter matters if I had a reason?” she tartly demanded.

“Most assuredly it would,” Trevelyan earnestly replied, “because then we could fight fairly.”

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"And now?"—with a haughty uplifting of her eyebrows.

"Now," he said, slowly, "you cling steadfastly to a most unfair judgment, one that you arrived at before granting me a hearing." The man's gaze was curiously steady and penetrating as he looked at her, and for a full minute she sat silent.

"What if I did not think about you at all?" she finally ventured.

Again the blood suffused his face, but he held himself firm.

"You mean, of course, that I am presumptuous in supposing you to be the least interested in my life. Well, if I listened to reason, undoubtedly I would appeal to a more merciful judge. Yet, because of your very unfriendliness, I am all the more determined that you shall hear what I have to say."

She was stirred by a sudden emotion that made her heart beat wildly. Try as she would to array the many reasons for her indifference, they fled now before the man's compelling personality, which stood revealed before her. All her haughty reserve and ad-

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mirable poise trickled away in an uneasy little laugh.

"Well," she said, with assumed sprightliness, "let me hear the story; from your expression, it must be tragic."

He remained now wholly imperturbed.

"Mine is not a long story," he said, gravely, "and it contains no heroic deeds; nor is it like your own life, full of usefulness." And then he began. He made no effort to appear unblameworthy for the shiftless content he had enjoyed, nor his quiet acceptance of the bargain that would give him money, through a rich wife; but it was bitterly hard for him to dwell upon his willingness to go through life without ambition of any sort. He finished by saying:

"I was a toy of that huge organization called Society. My ideals were not lofty, as you see; to me a lazy content was sufficient; then suddenly came my awakening; and now, after eighteen months of clean, manly work, I am able to realize what a miserable creature I was."

Trevelyan drew a deep breath as he fin-

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ished; she knew the very worst of him now, and though he felt humbled, he was sensible of a tremendous relief.

There was an unnatural calmness in Miss Templeton's voice when she spoke, but Trevelyan was as yet too agitated to notice it.

"And the young lady," she asked, "to whom you were engaged, of course she was equally pleased at the release you so freely offered?"

"That," said Trevelyan, grimly, "is the unfortunate part of it. She did not seem to be. There certainly was nothing romantic about our engagement. We have seen each other only once, in early childhood. She has shown me time and again that release would be welcome, and yet when I offered to release her she refused to accept it."

There was a curious light in the girl's eyes, and her color was heightening.

"Wh—when did you offer to release her?" she asked, somewhat breathlessly.

"The morning after I met you on the mountain," returned the man, boldly. His level, searching gaze held hers. "It seemed

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to me that I could not in honor hold her to it longer."

Miss Templeton's eyes fell before his.

"But," she persisted, in a lowered voice, "you are still engaged."

"If you call the condition I have described being engaged, yes. We are to meet in a few months. She has written me that if I still want to release her after our meeting, she will gladly accept; but till then I must hold myself bound."

A provoking smile flitted over the girl's face. "And *do* you hold yourself bound?" she queried.

"Only until I see her," the man answered, looking deep into her eyes.

She reddened, but found voice to ask: "And what brought about your awakening to duty? You said that a curious thing had determined you."

"Strange to say, it came through a woman."

Gloria gasped.

"A woman!"

"Yes, a woman—one whose face I did not see."

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This puzzled the girl, and she regarded him doubtfully.

"Who—where does she live?" she asked at length.

"I can not tell you, for I do not know. But her words, and the splendid character they revealed, awakened me—confirmed my wavering purpose—and I owe her a debt of gratitude that I can never repay."

"How strange!" murmured the girl in an odd voice. "What a pity she can not know!"

"She shall," said the man, "some day. I owe her that."

"You mean that you will find her?"

"Yes. I have often wondered whether she would care to hear."

"If she is a true woman she will," asserted Gloria. "Oh, to influence a man like that! How wonderful it would be!"

And like a flash of blinding light, jealousy gripped her and startled a protesting cry to go ringing through her brain. Why should this unknown woman have influenced him?

She steadied herself. This man was nothing to her, and never would be, yet his

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disclosure had disturbed her powerfully, and filled her with an inexplicable wonder and discontent.

With features a trifle drawn, his voice strained, Trevelyan abruptly leaned toward her and demanded:

"What would a woman say to a man who had tried? What would *you* say?"

And now she met his gaze unflinchingly.

"I—why should I say anything to such a man?" She laughed nervously.

Trevelyan had not stirred.

"Because the man asked you to?" he urged.

"Because he desired, above all things, to have your opinion?—your approval?"

It was a crucial test of faith between them, and the woman knew, as did the man, that, in spite of all antagonism, she would answer truthfully.

She tossed back her head and answered with splendid audacity:

"Why, in that case I should say to him: 'There is no limit to what you may attain; success shall be your portion.'"

"In all things?" he asked, hoarsely.

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“How could such a man fail?” she parried.

“And his goal at the end,” Trevelyan breathed heavily, “the thing he wanted most in the world—could he hope for that?”

The moment was a tense one for both. The fierce earnestness of the man frightened the woman; but, in spite of that fear, she met his glance bravely, answering:

“If a man like that wanted the stars, I believe he would get them.”



Chapter

17



HE afternoon sun flaunted its splendor of blue and gold like a banner. Away below, where Trevelyan and Gloria Templeton were resting, a long narrow lake, encircled by mountains, shimmered and sparkled in the sunshine. With an effort the girl stripped the situation of its intimacy.

"Let us mount to the crest!" she cried gaily, springing from her boulder seat.

The man smiled consent. A sense of isolation from all the rest of the world filled him

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with an intense joy, while the silence of the landscape, the pure snows, and the peaks of ice gave him a spirit of aloofness that was dangerously sweet. In the inner chambers of his heart Trevelyan knew that this vision of her by his side would journey with him always. If nothing more came to him he would have this, and the wonderful night upon the mountain; for that night he had been with the woman he loved, though only now he realized it. In storm and dark they had spoken; she had leaned upon his breast; his arm had supported her; and through it all she had shown him life as it should be lived.

And he was newly aflame with desire to live in accord with her ideals. Through her, at Lake Louise, had come his awakening, like the kindling dawn, mastering him, stamping out the old bondage of idleness and sloth; and the desire for something worth while was born, endowing him with the true spirit—the spirit of achievement!

Before he was aware of it, the day was nearly gone—the one glorious day she had promised him. And it had been all that he

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had anticipated, and more. Since his confession a change had come over her, her manner had perceptibly softened, and she had played the game fairly—had, anyway, pretended to enjoy it. Across the serrated ridges, down into the valleys, and up again they had wandered, pausing for lunch beside a crystal stream, ice-cold with the higher melting snows, that rushed past and plunged in a ribbon of spray a thousand feet below.

And now, in the setting sun, it was to be good-bye. His pulses throbbed. Did the moment hold any special significance for her? Or was she merely playing the game fair, as he had begged her to do, and would the parting be a relief? He watched her closely.

What a woman she was! Birth and breeding were her portion, nerve, generosity, mystery. The last he acknowledged as the comprehensive element of feminine allurements. And she was capricious, too; but, even though capriciousness can at times be cruel, always wholly charming and to be desired.

They paused at the last descent leading to the settlement and watched the sunset. Awed

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by the majesty of the scene, neither for the time being had thought for words; but at last she turned and saw that he was watching her. Her color instantly brightened, and she spoke eagerly, almost apologetically, as if she wanted forgiveness for her previous incivilities, by showing interest in him now.

“Mr. Trevelyan, will you always live in this country?”

“I hardly dare think that I am needed here,” he replied. “And yet”—he gestured toward the landscape—“I love it.”

She appeared to consider briefly. She had dropped her mask of reserve—a circumstance that bewildered him all the more—and seemed to be taking a genuine interest in his life.

“How can you even hesitate in your decision!” she chided. Then she continued warmly:

“The women you know would never have done what I have, I suppose; would never have expressed themselves as I have expressed myself; but I am a spoiled member of my sex. Here, in the West, women have some-

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thing to study besides etiquette and personalities. Women help to make history."

"You mean, that women in cities lead purposeless lives?" he encouraged her, profoundly interested in every sentiment she introduced.

"Yes, just that," she replied.

He smiled. "I fancy they would not agree with you, for their lives are very strenuous."

"True, but so purposeless. Among these snow mountains how trifling and petty life in a great city seems! All women, of course, do not lead the life I speak of; there are exceptions. They are the favored few who have heard the call. But the majority of city women are ignorant of life's possibilities; they live and die without knowing what the world might have held for them. Out here in this great Western world of mountain and prairie, who could miss the joy and greatness of life!"

Trevelyan felt himself to be in an unreal atmosphere, as he listened; his senses were tingling with the full fascination of an intelligent woman's sympathy.

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"Well," he said, with a faint gleam in his eye, "is this a psychological moment? And am I to furnish you a subject for history?"

"Now, you are laughing at me;" then, more soberly, "It is not of my country's history that I speak, but of your future."

His heart leaped. For a long moment something held him mute. For all the conversation was so light, he recognized a forceful, vital undercurrent of purpose, and he knew that his answer would mark the turning-point of his life.

What should he say?

About them was the golden light of the sinking sun, softening the rough edges of the mountains. His thoughts fled across the seas: had he turned his back upon his birth-right, or had he found it here? For an instant his heart sank at the recollection of home.

Gloria stood motionless, but he was keenly aware of her presence. What was there in this woman that called out the best in a man? She was like a woman of the early races built on lines of majesty and strength, he felt

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instinctively she could never fail. A faint fragrance about her hair, the color and warmth of her femininity threw out their spells, and his irresolution vanished. He looked down at her, for tall as she was, his height was even greater. For the moment realization of his strength gave him physical pleasure: she was splendid, vital, dynamic; but he was anything save a weakling himself.

"Your great Northwest," he began, "there is a germ of madness in it! I believe the spell of its enchantment has me fast."

She glanced up quickly.

"I shall remain," he concluded.

There was a light of exaltation in her eyes that he could not comprehend; her lovely countenance was transfigured, and the responsive joy that welled up in his heart was almost intoxicating.

"You will not regret your decision," she said warmly.

And yet, with the perfect closing of their halcyon day she refused to see him again! Tonta was waiting at the foot of the mountain, and this was to be the end.

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"Why do you desert me at this crucial moment?" he began. "I need your friendship. Will you not give it to me?" The eagerness in his face was great; this much he would have of her in spite of all ties, he said to himself. He held out his hand and stepped in front of her as he spoke. "I will wait here until you consent," he said smilingly, and though his heart throbbed madly his demeanor was calm.

She stepped aside quickly before he could touch her hand, and as the red flamed in her face she flung back her head. It was her loveliest attitude, but she answered defiantly: "What you ask is impossible. Friendship means much when it is given, and my soul is at variance with yours."

In spite of the answer Trevelyan still barred the way. He was reckless because of her refusal. He would gain her yet, only he must fight harder.

Trevelyan was a man who could face collectedly any ordinary crisis, but this girl's unreasoning obstinacy was confusing. Why was she so determined—nay, stubborn? But

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in spite of opposition he would not lose her again; this idea dominated his mind completely. As the time shortened he grew bolder, advancing reasons which, in calmer moments, would seem weak, and declared that his future success or failure depended on her encouragement.

His voice was imbued with the strength of his personality; his pleading was even passionate, and at times he stirred her until her heart beat wildly. His ardor nearly swept away the last vestige of her restraint.

Both were unwilling to admit that the great predominating factor had entered into their lives.

They were simply a man and a woman facing the old eternal problem of love. They trembled at its premonition. The primitive woman in Gloria fought that she might not be won too easily; and, bound as he was, he dared not ask for more than she might choose to grant.

She had confessed to him during the day that Tonta was a niece of the Blackfoot chief, and that the two girls had been in a tepee

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at the encampment at the very time Trevelyan was interviewing the old man.

And in the end, when Trevelyan found that he could not break her will, and knowing that the Government would withhold any information of her, he became humble and entreated her to make it easier for him to find her.

"Let me learn of you through the old chief, when I am ready to come to you next fall," he begged.

She perceived, as he had meant she should, that there was to be no doubt about his coming to her when he was ready. But although it frightened her and thrilled her not a little that he should speak so masterfully, she would not have been a woman if she had not resented his confidence; and it was with a glint of fire in her eyes that she bade him a soft adieu and in the same breath defied him to find her unless she was willing to be found.



Chapter

18



ND, after all, Miss Patricia Sutherland was not one of the Archbishop's party when Inspector Trevelyan met them at Maple Crossing. His Grace evinced considerable chagrin and disappointment when he approached the matter; but Trevelyan could not feel either of these emotions, since he had been ignorant of the young lady's intention of accompanying her guardian. If anything, he was relieved that he was not obliged to face her amid surroundings and associations so inti-

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mately identified with Gloria. "I am positive," said His Grace, "that Patricia did not deliberately contrive an occasion for avoiding Maple Crossing; indeed, I believe she had resolved to see you, that she had determined upon some course; but telegrams have been following her everywhere we went. She is a busy woman, you know; her vast charitable undertakings are numerous and very exacting."

"Don't think about it," Trevelyan cheerfully returned. Then, with some hesitancy, he asked:

"Has not Miss Sutherland informed you of my last letter?"

"What letter?"

"I wrote three months ago, releasing her unconditionally from our engagement."

His Grace was so patently shocked by this intelligence that it was plain the young lady had said nothing whatever about the letter. He very earnestly demanded:

"But, my son, why so hasty? Just as she was beginning to relent, too!"

The piercing eyes searched the young man's

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very soul, and the color mounted to his cheeks. He steadily returned the scrutiny, however.

"I should have released her long ago," he said.

"Oh, the inconsequence of youth!" deplored the Archbishop. "You are mad, quite mad. Lately I have been winning her to you. Her heart is changing, softening, for she sees that her grounds of objection are no longer tenable. Tell me, young man, how will her new attitude affect the situation?"

Trevelyan was startled. "I—I hope you are mistaken," he stammered.

The other was too perplexed for immediate speech. He contemplated Trevelyan's strong, handsome features long and intently, and could find no fault with what they disclosed of pure manliness.

"There is something here that I am unable to fathom," he said at last. "And I was counting so much on this meeting; it was just the ripe moment for removing the scales from the eyes of you two young recalcitrants."

"It is to my shame," Trevelyan contritely

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offered, "that I held her so long against her will."

"But, Trevelyan," persisted His Lordship, "there is surely a mistake somewhere. My ward told me three days ago that she was still engaged to you."

"That is because she desires to play fairly, I think; however, I do not consider that she has been, or is, fair. But I shall fulfill my part of the obligation—"

"Obligation?" interrupted His Grace.

"I can not regard it in any other light. I shall see you in Quebec."

The Archbishop sighed. "My boy, when you two see each other all will be well, I am confident."

Trevelyan shook his head. He reflected an instant, then with heightened color said:

"Your Grace, there is a vital reason why Miss Sutherland should release me. By my refusing to marry her she will gain every want of hers that such a union could fill, and without its very serious disadvantages. And, I love another woman."

The Archbishop was staggered.

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"Another woman!" he ejaculated, staring at Trevelyan as if he had presented the most unheard-of contingency that could possibly have arisen. "Wait a bit. This is a complication I never dreamed of. Another woman—here—in this raw country—incredible!"

The other could not repress a smile.

"Nevertheless, it is true," he said.

"Can you tell me about it?" asked the older man, with a certain wistfulness of expression.

"Gladly."

And Trevelyan did, keeping back nothing. There were stages of the narration at which the good Archbishop nearly choked with amazement, or some other emotion; but at last his countenance settled into an impassivity that made the speaker wonder what his thoughts were.

But he was not enlightened. At the recital's close, His Grace, with chin on breast and hands clasped behind him, fell to pacing slowly to and fro. Five minutes—ten minutes—passed before he came out of his meditation. When he paused before Trevelyan, who had been growing slowly uneasy, his face

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was still inscrutable, but in a moment his eye twinkled.

“I am profoundly curious to learn just what will happen when you lay the matter before Patricia,” he said.

Now, Trevelyan was immensely relieved that the Archbishop should take his disclosure so philosophically; yet he was not a little puzzled by the manner of that taking. He had rather dreaded the interview. In the utter simplicity of his innocence, did His Grace for a moment imagine that a view of Miss Sutherland’s refined charms must cause him to forget a passing fancy, such as this “raw country” might provide? Or was he actually enjoying the young people’s predicament? He did not like to think this.

He did not let the matter perplex him for long, however. His week’s furlough spent in the prelate’s company was in every way thoroughly enjoyable. The subject of his marriage was not again brought up or alluded to in any way, until the moment of parting was at hand; the Archbishop then gave him one hand and placed the other upon

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his shoulder, regarding him meanwhile with a shrewd, knowing look.

“My son,” said he, “are you quite sure you love this other woman?”

“Quite sure”—simply.

“And does she love you?”

“I do not know. How can I tell her of my love until I am free?”

“Right, my son,” he heartily endorsed this sentiment. “Your determination to wait does you credit.” Then a quizzical light twinkled in his eye. “This is a queer world—a queer world. We poor mortals are presumptuous enough to try to shape the future, to anticipate the Divine Will, and lo! all our labor is in vain; the results rise up and mock us.”

Trevelyan here expressed his satisfaction that the Archbishop should accept the situation so complacently. Another twinkle came into His Grace’s eye, and he gently patted the shoulder upon which his hand rested.

“My son,” said he, with dry humor, “your choice of words is not always felicitous. Complacently? That shows how much you

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know about it! Why, it is only my philosophy that keeps me from exploding."

And leaving the young man to mull over this enigmatical observation, he disappeared inside the Pullman.



Chapter

19



HAT subtle force is it that imparts to certain natures premonition of impending misfortune? Psychologists have dragged the process, with its attendant phenomena, from the occult, and defined it pretty well to their own satisfaction; but the vague sense of threatening disaster which sometimes weighs down the spirit must ever remain a mystery to the unenlightened mind.

After the Archbishop's departure, Colonel Trevelyan, for he had received his promotion,

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was conscious of such a feeling; a heavy, apprehensive sensation, which he set down to reaction following his week of fresh and novel experience. But as the days passed and grew into weeks, and the strange spells came over him with increasing frequency and intensity, he began to wonder and to become consciously restless and uneasy. Perhaps he would be suddenly startled from the absorption of his work into darting a keen glance out over the empty prairie, as if some delicate inner perception had divined the source of threatening danger; and he began to notice by and by that his eyes always sought the same point of the compass—the North.

What did the unbounded wilderness that lay there beyond the horizon's rim hold for him? What was the cause of this haunting foreboding?

Closely identified with this vague but none the less real disturbance was Gloria Templeton, for his mind dwelt on her continually. What had become of her? Never a word from her, never a sign; and he was profoundly discouraged, knowing that his was not the

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privilege to write to her until he had broken completely with Miss Sutherland.

Was ever a man so beset? And yet his predicament was not without its comical side. He was in love with one woman, and engaged to be married to another between whom and himself a very lively antipathy existed; and it looked pretty much as if he would have to forsake the one and cling to the other—deliberately renounce his heart's desire for the most unwelcome of substitutes.

But the Gloria of his dream was tender and kind, while the Gloria he knew was haughty and disdainful. Only rarely had she softened and unbent, but it was these cherished moments that colored his imaginings and by which he estimated her character. And on that last, that never to be forgotten day together, she had shown a real interest in him; could she have gone back into her world believing that he would not seek for her? No. And until she definitively ended all fellowship between them, he was grimly determined to persevere in his efforts to win her.

So it happened that he was in rather a mor-

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bid state when the electrifying telegram came to him at his depot. The intelligence contained in the message was aggravatingly brief—merely that a woman employed by the Government and her escort were overdue at one of the stations—but he knew. From somewhere in the northern woods her spirit had reached out and touched his, and the telegram followed simply as a confirmation of his misgivings.

He was in a fever of excitement. Outwardly calm, but inwardly chafing at every second's delay, he and four of his men were in the saddle before nightfall. The rain was coming down in torrents and the roads were desperately bad, but such details were annoying solely because they retarded the rider's progress.

As they plodded onward through the dusk and the night, Trevelyan resolutely considered all the possibilities of the case. His general knowledge of conditions enabled him to supply much information which the laconic telegram had omitted. He knew, for example, that the Wood Crees had been very restless

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of late, trying in many ways to pick a quarrel with the white settlers, and while the days of actual Indian warfare were past, still the savages were capable of annoying isolated farmers and cattlemen, or even perpetrating more serious outrages if they fancied themselves immune from detection and capture.

Now, that branch of the Crees known as the Wood Crees were widely distributed over the northern forest regions, and all night long the little squad of Mounted Police pressed northward, every step taking them into a wilder and less thickly settled country and farther away from help, should help be needed. They camped only long enough at daybreak to give their worn mounts a rest, to snatch an hour's sleep themselves, then into the saddle and away again. The day broke fair, but the going was still wretched. About noon they received their first news of those whom they were seeking.

Pausing at a rancher's, named Stuart, they learned that the missing company had rested there five days previously, and that they included a Mr. Mapleson and wife, tourists

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from Montreal; Miss Templeton and her Indian maid, and a number of Assiniboine guides, these last forming the only escort. They had been travelling along the regular routes; but from portions of conversation overheard by Stuart, he had gathered the idea that they were intending striking northward after a visit to the famous Alexandra mines; for what purpose he did not know.

This information was so circumstantial that Trevelyan, combining his knowledge of the topography of the North with the pretty generally known movements of the large bands of Indians, was enabled to decide upon an objective. So, abandoning all idea of trying to pick up the missing party's trail, he and his squad headed straight for a point that must bring him in the neighborhood of a minor Wood Cree chief known as Little Pine, who for some time had been heading a band of disaffected tribesmen.

Trevelyan gave Little Pine, as a new factor, much sober consideration. With more than two-score followers he had been openly defiant for several weeks. If they had molested the

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Mapleson party, the five rescuers were on the road to confronting an extremely serious and perilous state of affairs, with all the odds against them; while, on the other hand, if Little Pine should prove to be innocent of any offense against the travellers, undoubtedly he would be able to supply further intelligence regarding them, or be of material assistance in extending the search.

In either case, Trevelyan was not long in choosing the only course that lay open before him—to push on with all speed and take his chances—which were desperate enough. Reinforcements were out of the question without a long wait, and this was not for an instant to be thought of.

At the end of the second day's march from Stuart's ranch, the Inspector's worst fears were confirmed; the police stumbled upon a half-dozen or so Crees, whose precipitate flight at the squad's appearance went far to justify their suspicions.

The troopers were too fatigued to give chase; but early next morning they took up the fleeing Indians' trail, and within two

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hours arrived within view of an encampment of considerable size.

In a very dubious frame of mind, they contemplated a line of savages, both mounted and on foot, come crowding out and placing themselves between the new arrivals and an irregular circle of skin tepees which constituted the camp. Here was a serious enough problem; half-way measures would not do. The five realized that everything depended upon their coolness and nerve, and the extent to which the Indians might be of a humor to push resistance.

So, with Trevelyan several lengths in the lead and the four constables stringing along carelessly behind him, as if utterly indifferent to the opposing force, he rode deliberately, without haste, straight toward the camp. Not until he saw that the savages had no intention either of giving ground or making a way for him did he draw rein. Then, as his squad slowly joined him, he sat easily in his saddle and coolly surveyed the sullen, lowering faces. Not a word was spoken; not a move was made.

At last his eye singled out a young, red-

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blanketed buck, whose appearance had more of an air of authority about it than any of the others.

"Where is your chief?" he curtly demanded.

"I am Little Pine," the other replied, with an insolence that Trevelyan did not like. "What can the Scarlet Coats want with him that they have ridden so far and so fast?"

Whatever lingering doubts may have remained in Trevelyan's mind up to this stage were definitely dispelled by the fact that his entry into the camp was being resisted, and by the young chieftain's oppugnant attitude. But he swung down from his saddle, and with the bridle over his arm, advanced until he stood face to face with the motionless savage. He looked the other sternly in the eye. His tone and mien were uncompromisingly resolute and compelling.

"How is it," he asked, "that you and your people dare interfere with the movements of peaceable travellers? How dare you and your tribe stop the white man when he passes your tepees?"

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The Indian noticeably quailed before this man's virile strength and self-possessed mastery; Trevelyan's personality easily dominated the situation, and every Indian present was duly impressed. Little Pine replied in a tone less bellicose.

"We meant no harm to our pale-face brethren. Finding them alone so far from their habitation, we invited them to remain and rest with us, meaning to let them depart quietly in the morning. Were we to blame when, in the night, their ponies went lame? Ask them whether we have treated them as enemies, or with kindness."

Trevelyan eyed him scornfully, fully aware that the man was lying.

"Listen," he continued. "You are all traitors. You eat the bread of the white man, and yet you injure his people; for you stop him and hold him against his will. If you are doing this to anger us, or if you are planning war against the white man, know that you will find him ready. Your warriors are like little children before him, for he will blot you out as the night wipes out the day." He

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turned to the other motionless, blanketed figures, and continued:

“And now I am going to take your chief with me when I go; he must be punished like a little child who has not obeyed his father. And whether his punishment shall be greater or less, depends upon the promptness with which you restore these travellers’ ponies and all their possessions.”

There was a stir among the warriors at this bold speech, which grew to an uproar among the squaws and children among the tepees. The four troopers ostentatiously loosened the flaps of their pistol holsters and held their carbines in readiness. At this moment Trevelyan felt a warm gush of gratitude for the reputation of the Mounted Police, which has inspired in the hearts of Canadian wrongdoers, whether white or red, such a wholesome fear; for just one tense second the outcome trembled in the balance; then the chief folded his red blanket around him and spoke as if he had been deeply injured.

“What has Little Pine done to cause anger? My brother is moon-mad when he talks

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of war. He is in the camp of friends, and the pipe of peace is waiting."

"The peace-pipe," returned Trevelyan shortly, "can not be smoked between us until our friends are given all their ponies and possessions, and are allowed to join us."

Without another word, Little Pine turned away, and Trevelyan, leading his mount, started to follow. But the braves who still pressed around showed no inclination of yielding so readily. They opened up a way for their leader, but closed in so quickly behind him that Trevelyan found his own way blocked.

To hesitate would be fatal. And to support his bold stand with the last resort—force—he was most earnestly desirous of avoiding. While doubtless he would be permitted to go scathless, to recede now would leave the Indians absolute masters of the field and defeat the purpose of the expedition.

One of those wigwams, he knew, concealed Gloria Templeton. The thought was maddening. Darting a glance round the circle of grinning, defiant faces, he was seized with a

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sudden blind, unreasoning fury, and it is more than likely that his next act would have been disastrously rash had not the crucial situation's complexion been changed in a most unexpected and startling manner.

A woman's voice—Gloria's voice—rang out high and clear.

"We are here, Colonel Trevelyan. They are holding us by force and trying to keep us silent by—"

The abrupt smothering of the voice had the effect of a live wire upon the police and temporarily disconcerted the Indians.

In a flash Trevelyan was back in his saddle, madly spurring his horse straight at a levelled carbine along whose barrel gleamed the sinister eye of a brave plainly bent upon murder.



Chapter

20



THIS is a well known fact among old-time Indian fighters that the untutored American aborigine is not only the most successful bluffer in the world, but that when his bluff is called he possesses also the extraordinary faculty of retaining his dignity and making the other fellow feel rather cheap and ashamed of himself instead of triumphant. The difficulty lies in the impossibility of ascertaining whether he is merely bluffing or in dead earnest until after the critical moment

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—when, of course, it would be too late. Under certain conditions, he is an unknown quantity, governed by laws and influences unknown to the Caucasian mind, and indifferent to many which a white man accepts as elemental and universal.

As he faced the levelled carbine, Trevelyan did not even think of his own danger. His career would have ended then and there if the savage had been in earnest. But he dashed the weapon to one side. It was not fired. The Indians scattered before his rush, and in a second he and the four troopers were in the midst of the camp.

In an amazingly brief space tranquillity reigned where a moment before had been turmoil. Even before Trevelyan drew his horse to a standstill, every Indian was going about his own affairs, paying absolutely no heed to the police. Little Pine sat placidly smoking in front of his own tepee, apparently immersed in profound meditation, from which it seemed the height of rudeness to disturb him. In truth, the police were not unlike a quintet of ruthless Goths bursting upon and



Trevelyan did not think of his own danger

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shattering a scene of Arcadian peace and simplicity.

But any such feeling was quickly dissipated from Trevelyan's breast when he caught sight of Gloria's pale face and tragic eyes. She and an elderly gentleman and lady had emerged from one of the tepees, and he saw at a glance that none of them had been harmed.

His heart swelled at the little cry of gladness Gloria uttered as her answering glance met his. He quickly dismounted, and she ran impulsively forward and held out her hands. He crushed them in his.

"You are safe—unhurt?" she cried with a solicitude she did not attempt to conceal.

"Yes," he returned huskily. The curb he was putting upon his desire to gather her in his arms was almost suffocating him. "And you? Have they hurt or insulted you?"

"Oh, no, no. Not until this morning, after the hasty return of a hunting party. We were made to stay inside a tepee and keep quiet. I divined that—that you—that a search-party was looking for us, and I have been

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nervous with anxiety over the way Little Pine might receive them. I recognized your voice, and when I called out a squaw clapped her hand over my mouth." She smiled ruefully. "It was not very clean."

He drew a long breath, and for a moment forgot where he stood, holding her gaze to his. He did not see the wretched creatures around, he saw only the woman he loved; knew she was safe, and was filled with a great thankfulness. Then he realized she had missed him as he had missed her, else why should the tell-tale color have mounted in her cheeks at sight of him? And as she looked upon him the answering blood leapt to his own. The search for the completing woman, whether only subconscious or not, is always the act of a normal man. This is one of the ever-present mysteries of the world, and in the perfect system of the ages it has lasted and will last forever. And though in the gamut of activity he makes mistakes, he never tires of pursuit.

Colonel Trevelyan soon learned that the party had suffered no greater indignity than

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the enforced delay, excepting that the squaws had tormented Tonta so cruelly and persistently that Gloria had been obliged to keep the girl constantly with her. The Crees are one of the most warlike tribes of Canada and the Blackfeet are their hereditary enemies, and Tonta, being a helpless representative of the hated tribe, was looked upon as a legitimate object of malicious persecution. When Mr. Mapleson complained to Little Pine, the chief laughed and pronounced it "squaw war," intimating that it was beneath his dignity to interfere, so the women and children continued their persecutions.

The Mapleson party had camped one night near the Cree tepees, only to discover next morning that all their horses had disappeared. Inquiry elicited the alarming information that the party were at liberty to continue their journey, but that all the ponies had gone lame during the night and the Indians would keep them "until they were well and strong." No amount of persuasion or threats prevailed upon the Indians to produce the horses; otherwise the party had not been molested and, save

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for the treatment of Tonta, had been shown even courtesy and kindness.

"When Little Pine learned who I was," Gloria contributed to the recital, "he quickly began to regret what he had done. I believe he would have restored our horses pretty soon and sent us on our way; the ponies would have gotten well as miraculously as they went lame; but he was in the predicament of the man who caught the wildcat—he didn't know how to let go."

They were ready to start upon the southward journey in a very short time. Trevelyan went over to where Little Pine still sat and smoked, and curtly bade him get ready. The Cree rose up with an air of injured innocence and said in a solemn tone:

"I will go with my white-faced brother who speaks in hot anger, so that I may keep peace for my people; but I will soon return, and then our white friends will feel shame that they have taken me."

And with much dignity he moved away to get his horse, presently joining the cavalcade.

Great beauty is always disturbing, and now

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that Trevelyan found himself again with Gloria it required courage to control his feelings.

The morning air was fresh and keen as they rode along; overhead, the clouds were laced with silver, and the spirit of the distant mountains called to them to look and enjoy. The woman beside Trevelyan was an excellent rider, carrying herself straight and proudly in the saddle. The poise of her head pleased him; her frank smile, her serious eyes, the glint of her coppery hair in the sunlight, were to him things truly wonderful. He believed what she had told him, that in her veins ran the blood of the Chevaliers of France; and here among the Canadian wilds her beauty was as formidable as had been the power of her valiant ancestors. Watching her, he drank deep of a sparkling happiness more potent than wine.

They proceeded in silence for some time, her gaze directed ahead as if watching some object intently, and he respected her disinclination to talk. Presently, however, she turned and faced him, and there was a light in her

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fine eyes that sent the blood sweeping to his face. For their look was no longer aggressive or angry. Some loose strands of hair fluttered from beneath her hat, and she brushed them aside as she addressed him.

"Colonel Trevelyan, the stream of gratitude must always flow from me to you after what you have done," she said humbly, regarding him with a frank, sweet seriousness.

He had never heard this tone from her before, and it thrilled him. It was with difficulty that he answered calmly.

"What I did was nothing. But had it been otherwise—had the Crees really been ugly—had I come too late—life never would have been the same to me again."

They were riding somewhat behind the rest of the party. Two khaki-clad troopers went ahead; immediately behind them Mr. and Mrs. Mapleson rode side by side; then, with a trooper on each side of him, or when the narrowness of the trail necessitated it, in front and behind, rode Little Pine; and last of all came Colonel Trevelyan and Miss Templeton.

The Cree chieftain was garbed in deerskin

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shirt and leggings, his red blanket belted round his waist. Dressed as he was, it seemed impossible that he could have sat his horse at all; but he was doing it gracefully.

The party had now entered the broken ground of the foothills, the jagged buttresses of the mountains. The slopes were clothed with a green mantle of obelisk firs, the apex of each individual tree being crowned with a mass of fireweed in its brightest Autumn tints of purple and red.

Gloria Templeton saw all this as she listened to the man beside her. For the first time she acknowledged the presence of his spirit's clear flame in its contact with hers, and beheld him as he was in the incarnate strength of youth and sincerity. And she told herself: "It is true that I have misjudged him, but it is now too late; he would never forgive." And turning again to him, she asked lightly (for his last speech had been much too pointed and ardent for her peace of mind):

"Then you are not sorry you came?"

Restraint is a good thing in a man, but for

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the life of him Charlton Trevelyan could not control his voice, for the girl's question precipitated the very thing she was seeking to avoid. The man laughed triumphantly and caught and held her hand in his, and as the horses stopped in their slow walk exclaimed:

"Sorry! Not the least in the world." He looked deeply into her eyes, and as her color rose and she shook her hand free, he concluded: "I have had the audacity to fall in love with you, you see. When I am at liberty to ask it of you, you shall come to me freely, willingly, even if the whole world opposes."

Glowing with emotion the woman protested feebly, and her eyes were mirrors of light.

"You—you are mad," she gasped. "I do not know you well enough to listen to you."

He seemed to have risen high above any objection that she might now oppose; indeed, he was so sure of himself, and of her, that a momentary sense of helplessness suddenly enveloped her. It is ever a woman's first instinct to flee before the pendulum swings back to abject surrender.

"You know life," he returned, imperturb-

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ably. "You know how weak and conventional your objection is. It is not propinquity that makes or unmakes love; nearness or absence does not affect my thoughts of you. Why do you always hold yourself so aloof? Is it that you fear to know me better because love may enter your heart?"

"No!" she hotly disclaimed, her face scarlet.

"Then why do you always fight me?" And as she did not answer, he leaned toward her, his lowered voice all at once vibrant with passion: "If to love a woman against one's own judgment and against her will is madness, then I am mad. For I love you. I shall love you eternally."

A wild, reckless feeling surged up from Gloria's heart, glistening in her eyes and transfiguring her face; it was wholly joyous, yet it frightened her, and she panted a protest.

"You—you must not—say such things to me—now."

"Why?"

"You have not the right."

"But I love you. Search your own heart

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and tell me whether that does not condone my presumption. I love you. It would bring us together from the ends of the earth!"

She was steadier now.

"You!—say that to me," she said huskily, "and yet you tell me you are pledged to another woman!" She caught her breath sharply.

But she seemed to have lost power to disturb his serene assurance.

"If that is your only objection, I shall soon get unpledged."

"Even then," she said bitterly, "there is more between us."

"There is only what you choose to place there," said Trevelyan, with a quick glance at her face. "From the first you have perplexed me with just such cryptic utterances. Why try to enshroud yourself in so much mystery? You are yourself; that is abundantly sufficient for me. I am no longer curious, only wholly happy in your presence."

She abruptly sat more erect in her saddle, lifting her brows in the old familiar haughty way.

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"You imagine your creed of love the only one to follow?"

"For me, yes," he returned easily. "And for you, too, if you choose to make it so."

Again her heart leaped, for his wooing was fire and flame to her. She had never before confronted a man who so gloried in his passion. The superman was conquering, and she knew it; one by one he was tearing down every safeguard that she had so painstakingly erected, and doing it with an ease and a calm assurance that confused and frightened her. In a supreme effort she fought to regain her self-possession; but the only weapon she could bring to her aid was a pitiful makeshift of flippancy.

"Well," she said desperately, "supposing I should attempt to live according to your creed, what guarantee have I that *you* could ever teach me the lesson?"

This speech could have come no nearer working her undoing if she had uttered it in all seriousness.

"You are learning it now," he affirmed thickly. "You can not deny it. You told me

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once I could not fail to reach the goal I wanted. I want you. I am going to have you. Listen to me. I have waited for you from the beginning of the world; God sent you to me, you are mine"—

"No," she answered rebelliously at his masterful tone, but she covered her face with her hands. Yet it was despair, not defiance, he heard in her voice.

"I swear," he continued, "that when I am free I shall fight until I win you, if I have to cross every snow-bound range between here and Montreal on foot to do it. Nothing on earth shall stand between us."

The man was splendid, irresistible. For a moment she was blinded, the rushing blood sang in her ears, a choking sensation filled her throat. She knew that if she said one word that her past reserve and self-control would be swept away by utter abandonment to this exquisite delight that was consuming her like a fever. And before she knew it she had lashed her astonished pony and was plunging headlong, unseeingly, to rejoin Mr. and Mrs. Mapleson.



Chapter

21



ALL that night Gloria Templeton lay awake, listening to the crackle of the fir-wood fire. After the day's emotional storm she was in a physical stupor, as it were, her muscles lax and reluctant to move; but her brain was a riot of tumultuous thought. The joy that had exalted her slowly died away, leaving in its place a dull, aching pain.

Of all women, she hated to think that she had been unfair. Reliant herself, she had often wondered whether it would not be

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pleasanter to be a man than even the fairest of her own sex; yet, until today, she had been pretty well satisfied with life. She was devoted to her work, and the gratification of knowing that she gave satisfaction in return was hers. She had been taught that earnest work was the only way to true happiness, and her feeling of disdain for the drones had been intensified by her surroundings.

But tonight she knew that she had misjudged a man by believing him to be a shirker of life's responsibilities, an incompetent, an idler, a jellyfish sort of creature, spiritless and without ambition. The iron entered her soul at the thought of her scorn of his first attempt to overcome and live down the teachings of his earlier years. Anyhow, he was not to blame; he had been the helpless victim of environment, the creature of a condition, and he had demonstrated that the stuff had always been in him, by breaking away from those unworthy life habits and taking a man's place in the world. She had questioned his determination to stick, had doubted his ability to meet the struggle; and now that he had proven

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to her the unreliability of her judgment, she was disheartened and downcast. She wanted to encourage him, to approve his course, to rejoice with him, and shame arose in her throat that she could not, because she had not the right. The very fact that he was all she would have demanded in a husband only made matters worse.

When her thoughts became intolerable she spurred her tired body to activity. Throwing aside her blankets, she made her way softly beyond the circle of firelight.

The air was keen and crisp, and as it caressed her hot brow she was all at once soothed and calmed. "I do rejoice," she confided to the night; "I am glad, glad that he is worthy, even though he can be nothing to me but a memory."

She saw his former years as only a passive stage in his development, wherein he had awaited the secret inner voice to speak and bring him to a full understanding of life.

Her mind reverted to the night of storm upon the mountain: although she had not believed in him then, he had stirred her soul,

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and a subconscious cognition of a fact that her objective mind was blind to, had impelled her to fight him.

"Alas!" she told herself, as she stood under the brilliant stars and looked at the high-crested mountains, "now that I truly believe all good of him it is too late. I deserve to suffer because I misjudged him. I let him go away then without a tithe of my secret, and when he learns it he will show no mercy!"

The night was wonderful. Hours—it seemed ages—ago the sun had gone down in an awful crimson splendor, and a low-hanging moon was gliding to her plunge behind the silvered line of the higher peaks. In the distance a small stream rippled in lines of white brilliance, flashing here and there as if elfin bands were wantonly uncovering jewels upon its bosom.

It came across the girl that it was no wonder the Indians worshipped the forces of Nature; their pantheistic beliefs seemed most regular and proper. Her own spirit was in tune with the splendors of the universe.

She crept back to her couch before dawn,

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and when the sun rose and the camp was once more astir, she was paler than her wont, but apparently in her usual spirits. She had made up her mind what she must do, and as a courageous woman she would not shrink from duty. Charlton Trevelyan had once made a confession to her; the time had come when she believed he must listen to hers.

It was to be their last afternoon together, for the day would bring them to the branch railroad which would carry her out of the mountains and down into the broad prairies and wheat-fields that marked the way to Winnipeg.

Once more they were riding alone, but their moods were vastly different from what they had been the day before. Both had had time to face a revolutionizing condition in their lives, and to readjust themselves to it—the woman's doubts having settled upon a resolve to humble her pride and renounce her life's happiness; while the man had arrived at a determination to free himself from a false position so that he could in honor sue for *his* heart's desire, and to do so at the earliest pos-

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sible moment. So speech between them was something of an effort, punctuated by long gaps of silence.

He broke one of the longest pauses by an announcement which, uttered in the most matter-of-fact tones though it was, gave her a distinct shock of surprise.

"The time is near at hand when I must resign from the Service," said he.

The color left Gloria's face and she stared at him wide-eyed.

"I believe you will commend my course," Trevelyan went on in explanation, "when you understand my reasons. The world offers no more honorable a career for a man than the Royal North-West Mounted Police of Canada; but you must admit that it has one very serious drawback for anybody with wide and varied ambitions—its possibilities are narrowed and restricted to one end. It exacts too much of one's time for one to turn one's attention to anything else.

"However, if a man is sincere and earnest, if he keeps his eyes open, he pretty soon learns all there is to know about the country, and

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he is constantly running across all sorts of opportunities in the most out of the way places, and at the most unexpected times."

The girl's face cleared and she nodded. She was beginning to comprehend the drift of his talk.

"Some time ago," Trevelyan continued, "I burnt my bridges behind me and took a plunge into the future—but not blindly. I relinquished my income for a cash settlement, and this small capital I have been investing—one or two promising mining-claims, quite a holding of first-rate timber, and some tip-top Alberta wheat land. Take my word for it, Miss Templeton, that country is shortly going to 'boom,' as you say over here. Already I have been offered nearly double what I put into it. . . . What is the matter?"

The queer expression with which the girl was studying his face had elicited the abrupt question. She colored with confusion.

She said with a nervous laugh: "Was my wonder and awe as patent as all that? Seriously, though, your enthusiasm carried me out of myself; set me to contrasting the present

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with—with"—she faltered and ended rather disjointedly—"with the picture of your past as you once depicted it to me."

"Not to my discredit, I trust?"

"No," she said faintly, averting her gaze. He went on:

"Well, things have come to this stage: I feel that I can accomplish more and better results by devoting all my time to these different enterprises; in fact, I stand to lose by them unless I do. The Mounted Police have made it possible to put this country to the glorious uses for which God intended it, and now it's the duty of the men who are equipped, financially or otherwise, for the undertaking, to develop its resources. They can do no greater service for their fellows."

"You are right," she said softly, not meeting his eyes, "you are right."

"Thank you," he gravely returned. "I needed only such an expression from you to insure my success. I can't regard failure even as a remote possibility."

They relapsed into silence which Gloria herself presently ended.

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"Tomorrow this time," she told him, "if nothing happens, I shall be in Winnipeg. I wonder what mad prank of fate will throw us together again?" And before he had time to interpose, she concluded in a hollow voice: "I am to meet my guardian there."

He expressed a quick curiosity, and for some unaccountable reason the girl blushed again.

"It is to my shame," she said, "that I have not mentioned him before. I owe him everything."

Then Trevelyan's heart warmed to the unknown guardian. He must be a splendid type if she praised him. He smiled gently as their eyes met, but said nothing because, to his surprise, she was much agitated, and he gave her time to recover herself.

But his blood tingled warmly at the thought that he could now so stir her susceptibilities. Manlike, he longed to take her in his arms and kiss away her tears.

"I shall be glad to meet him," said Trevelyan. "For, if you do not mind, I am going with you. And on to Quebec."



Chapter

22



UNTIL he should be able to come to her free and untrammelled, this was to be their last evening together. His heart was heavy: how would he have the strength to let her go?

He stood before the wide open hotel window, awaiting her coming. The gleaming lights of Winnipeg were sharp points of brightness against the velvety blackness of night, but they gleamed dully for him; the low hum of the busy city life was strange after so long a time in the open, but it smote his ears disagreeably.

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Low in the West hung the evening star, but its brilliancy was dimmed; it was not the fine light that shone upon the faraway mountains. What if she refused to come to him at last? In the final test, what if he failed to break down the barriers of her reserve? Indeed, he was sick at heart.

She had hinted that something stood between them; but she should be his in spite of all, he swore over and over again; nothing should separate them now that she had not refused him outright.

A swish of skirts came to him, and he swung round to meet her. She came to him clad in lustrous white and in evening-dress. It was the first time he had seen her so, and the sight of her beauty dazzled him. She seemed to draw the soul out of his body. Her bare arms and throat were like satin, but her cheeks were very pale. The glowing eyes, the red tints of her shining hair, were the only bits of color about her.

He caught his breath quickly and stepped impetuously forward to catch her hand. But she gently withdrew it.

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"Colonel Trevelyan," she began, "I have something to say to you, and I am finding it infinitely harder than I thought."

"If it is so disagreeable," he said lightly, "why tell me at all? We have such a little time to spend together, you know, before I must be off."

"Because I must. I can not be at peace until I do. When you learn the truth, you will despise me."

Her manner was so tragic that he sobered.

"Nothing," he assured her with a grave gentleness, "could make me despise you. Why—can you not see? It is the you that I know that I love; nothing else matters. Nothing else can weigh—"

Extending her hand, she checked him with a sudden passionate outburst.

"Oh, don't! Don't make it any harder for me. God knows that what I have to say is bitter enough!"

His love would have been of small account if the intensity of her feelings had not alarmed him. He waited while she drove herself to proceed.

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"I have deceived you from the very first."

"That's nothing," he once more assumed a cheerfulness of tone. "What I was trying to impose upon you was the worst sort of sham—a hollow imitation of a man."

But she was not to be turned aside.

"My deception was deliberate and intentional," she said. "I meant from the first to deceive you, and I have carried it right up to this moment. I am not Gloria Templeton."

"Not Gloria Templeton!" he echoed, unable to hide his surprise. "Do you mean that is not your name?"

"Yes."

"Well," after a pause, "if that is what was so hard to tell, let me hear the true name and your ordeal will be over. What is it?"

"Patricia Sutherland."

After the night in the mountain cabin, when she had told him that she was "G. Templeton," he had fancied himself immune forever after from utter and overwhelming astonishment. But all the words with which one might portray the utmost extremity of that paralyzing species of mental shock are but

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weak and inefficient tools to describe the effect of the girl's declaration. It would be true to say that he was staggered, swept from his mental balance; but none of these expressions can convey more than a glimmer of an idea to what extent he was moved. For how long he did not know his brain was incapable of receiving any impression whatever.

And then by degrees he awakened to the fact that she was still speaking, and he listened for the simple reason that he could not have thought of a word to utter if his very life had depended on it. Indeed, later she was obliged to go over the entire story again in order to supply details he had not heard at all.

But he was dimly conscious that she was not sparing herself. She told how her scorn of him had made her despise him long before she saw him; how contempt had made her unjust in all of her criticisms, coloring and warping her judgment even after she had come to know him; how she had questioned and doubted his most transparent acts and motives, and denounced him as a hypocrite; and

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finally, how she would not allow him to break his engagement, because she wanted to face him with scorn and throw back as Patricia Sutherland the love he had offered Gloria Templeton.

Then she broke down. Her agitation stirred him as the most supreme effort of his self-command was unable to do, and then words came.

"But my letter," he questioned: "that came from you in Quebec, and you were in the Indian camp all the time?"

"Not all the time," she replied. "I was in Quebec eight weeks out of the twelve weeks of absence. Four were spent in the tepee near Maple Crossing."

In a measure he had regained his composure by this time, and his thoughts flew quickly back to the Archbishop, to their first interview, and the deep concern which His Grace had manifested over their ill-feeling toward each other. Then he recalled the calmness with which the prelate had heard his confession at Maple Crossing, and the latter's simplicity all at once assumed an aspect of

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worldly wisdom and astuteness that he had never suspected.

And then, with a suddenness that made the girl gasp, he laughed. Even amid this tragic situation the thought of the Archbishop's complete knowledge of the whole affair was irresistible. But as suddenly the laughter ceased and an indescribable light of tenderness came into his face, and her own reddened furiously. She could not meet his look.

"And you—Gloria Templeton," he said incredulously, "are really Patricia Sutherland!"

"Yes," faintly.

"Then please to remember that we are still engaged and that you persistently refused to release me."

"I release you now," she said hurriedly, but with abrupt vehemence. "I shall never touch a penny of the money you have given me—never, never, never!"

"Nonsense," he interrupted, "can't you see how your story alters everything? How every obstacle is smoothed away?" And as he took a step towards her, he added earnestly, "I

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shall not release you. You are mine by every law, and I shall certainly take you."

But she evaded his arms. "I deceived you," she persisted, breathing hard; "you can never forget that. Though Gloria Templeton—my mother's name, is a part of mine, too—still my intention was to deceive. Nothing can condone that."

He dismissed it with a breath. "It is the name by which you were known in the Secret Service; what more natural than that you should give it to me?"

"I could not have used my own name in the Service," she admitted, "because it is too well known. The officials, my guardian, and a few of my closest friends alone knew of my identity, and for that reason I feel guiltier. I knew you could not discover me."

He answered only: "I love you," and tried to draw her to him.

But still she held him off, though her beautiful face was radiant and glorified, and she was overcome with a confusion that was inexpressibly sweet to the man.

"And you can still forgive?" she asked.

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"I have nothing to forgive, nothing," he said. "Do you not see that you alone gave me courage and ambition? That if I ever do anything worthy, it will be because of you—of you, beloved?"

Yet still she held herself aloof, still she fought him off. If she ever went to him it must be with perfect faith; nothing should ever stand between them again.

Eagerly he held out his arms. But, with scarlet cheek and the old imperious uplift of the head, she proudly questioned: "And that woman, she who first gave you courage, who awakened the glow in your soul—what if you should meet her; would she not stand forever as a wraith between us?"

"But I have found her long ago, am pleading to her now for my life's happiness."

And then the girl heard what seemed to her incredible. Yet she remembered well the scene at Lake Louise, and the figure of the man in the shrubbery.

"There is only one thing that can stand between us now," he breathed softly; "will you deny me that?"

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"That was yours ever since we climbed the mountain together," she said simply.

And as a smile broke over her face he caught her in his arms and held her close. And looking into her eyes and seeing there belief in him, and love, he laid his lips on hers.

Through anger and doubt, almost through fire and sword, he had won her: the woman God had made for him, and he took her to himself.

An hour passed before they were conscious of the world again. She pushed back the soft waves of hair from her eyes, saying: "We have both forgotten my uncle."

He kissed her for her forgetfulness, as they rose to meet him.

Said His Grace banteringly, greeting them with a chuckle: "Ah, my children, I should have known better than to doubt the little arrowed god when once you met. But," he added with twinkling eyes, "my fear was the timidity of age."

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